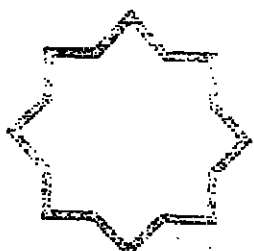
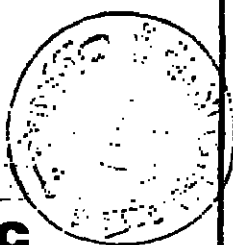


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The Star



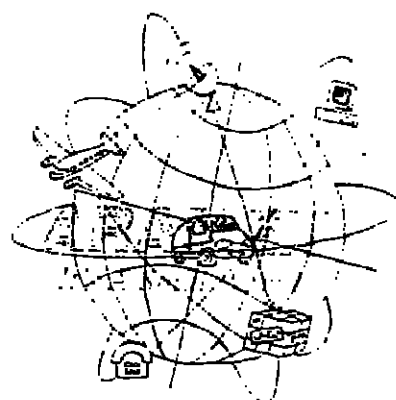
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A special ISO 9000 supplement

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Tel. 5536735 Fax. 5516820

AMMAN, 20-26 MARCH 1997, VOLUME 7, NUMBER 44, 350 fils

أسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

la Jordanie à Paris mars-octobre 97

Supplément

La Jordanie reine de Paris

A l'occasion de la «saison jordanienne» qui a actuellement lieu en France. Le Jourdain vous propose un numéro spécial de huit pages. Et pour la première fois, des exemplaires de ce journal sont disponibles en France.

Pages 7 à 14

Sudden end of the Kabariti era

By a Star Staff Writer
AMMAN—Mr. Abdel Karim Kabariti's disappearance from the political center stage in Jordan is as sudden as his rise to the helm more than a year ago. The 49-year-old Aqaba deputy was the youngest Jordanian ever to become prime minister in the history of the state. He came with a strong

News Analysis

Royal mandate: to launch a white revolution aimed at unleashing the hidden and untapped resources of Jordan's young talents and to employ these resources in the service of the state in the peace era.

Mr. Kabariti's style of government was indeed different from previous premiers. He leaves as no less controversial today as when he first formed his government. The era of Kabaritism, as the press liked to call it, will be remembered for its head-on collision politics: The lifting of bread subsidies and the ensuing violence in the south, incessant confrontations with deputies, arrest of journalists, attack on the Iraqi leadership among others. But he will also be remembered for his efforts to confront the country's endemic economic problems. His government passed important economic laws and took major strides on the road of economic restructuring—albeit at the expense of its popularity. But Mr. Kabariti said it many times: that he was not seeking popularity—and indeed he never got it.

But until the last day in office, Mr. Kabariti remained confident of

Continued on page 2

King accepts Kabariti's resignation Majali forms government that will oversee elections

By Star Staff Writer
AMMAN—In an unexpected political development, His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday accepted the resignation of the government of Prime Minister Abdel Karim Kabariti and asked former Prime Minister Abdel Salam Al Majali to form a new one. Dr. Majali and his 23-member cabinet were sworn in before the King Wednesday evening at the Royal Court.

The surprise resignation of the 49-year-old Kabariti ended weeks of speculations about the cabinet reshuffle that the former premier was preparing to make once Parliament went into recess in preparation for the general elections that are scheduled to take place later this year. The King issued a Royal Decree on Monday terminating the current ordinary session of Parliament.

Until early this week, Mr. Kabariti appeared to be well placed to keep his job and oversee the holding of the elections. He was praised on several occasions by the King recently renewed his call on the prime minister to carry



pressing economic and administrative reforms.

But in a strongly-worded letter, in which he accepted Mr. Kabariti's resignation, the King openly criticized the prime minister for not acting swiftly

to deal with the deteriorating conditions in the Kingdom and for failing to reform the civil service and meet the new challenges. The King admitted that the wording of his letter was a departure from the norm that was necessitated by Mr. Kabariti's unusually long letter in which he defended his record.

Observers believe the killing by a Jordanian soldier of seven Israeli school girls in Bagoura last Thursday and the King's emotional visit to Israel earlier this week aimed at salvaging relations with the Jewish state

may have played a decisive role in shaping the King's decision to sack Mr. Kabariti's 13-month-old government.

The King's choice of Dr. Majali as prime minister was no less surprising. The 72-year-old medical physician formed his first government in 1993 and remained in office for 19 months until January 1995. But most importantly is the fact that King Hussein handed Dr. Majali the tough job of leading Jordan's delegation to the Madrid peace conference in October 1991. Dr. Majali continued to head Jordan's negotiating team with the Israelis until he was asked to form his government.

In his letter of appointment, the King asked Dr. Majali to focus his efforts on dealing with domestic issues such as an inflated and ineffective government bureaucracy, improving public services and overseeing the holding of the general elections. He also stressed the need to safeguard the achievements of the peace process, support the Palestinian people in their struggle to achieve their

Continued on page 2

Palestinians escalate protest as Israel breaks ground in Abu Ghneim

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—Palestinians escalated their peaceful protests against Israel's decision to start construction work at Jabal Abu Ghneim Wednesday, but observers described the situation as extremely tense and volatile.

Bulldozers guarded by hundreds of heavily armed Israeli troops broke ground Tuesday for a new Jewish neighborhood in East Jerusalem, despite warnings that the action could provoke a violent Palestinian response and threaten the fragile peace process.

Soon after four yellow earth-movers began to carve a new road in the disputed hillside south of Jerusalem, there were reports of scattered Palestinian protests, including scuffles between a small group of students and Israeli soldiers on an adjacent hill.

Israeli and Palestinian officials braced for the chance of more serious conflict in com-



Israeli bulldozers arrive at Jabal Abu Ghneim Tuesday amid high security measures

ing days.

Palestinian leaders and diplomats here said Israel's decision to proceed with the con-

troversial housing project has pushed Middle East peace-making to its lowest point since deadly gun battles

broke out between Israelis and Palestinians in September.

Continued on page 2

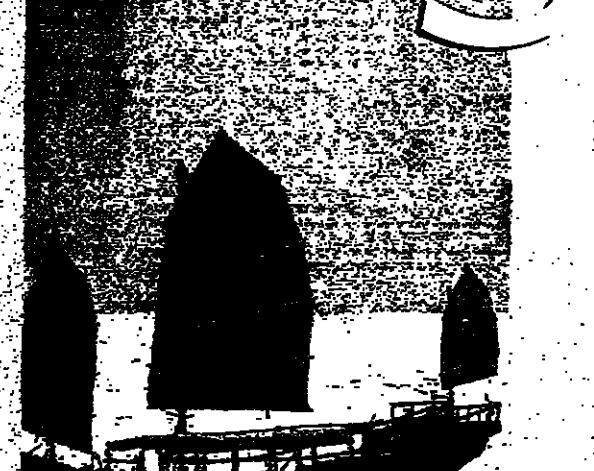
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BILL GATES



'Luck plays a role in success'



A colony ponders an uncertain future

Hawaiian

tsunami

Activists demand fair trial for Dakamseh

By Raed Al Abed
Star Staff Writer

JORDANIAN POPULAR organizations are demanding a fair and just trial for the Jordanian soldier who killed and wounded a number of Israeli young girls last Thursday. The shooting took place when a Jordanian military driver seized his comrade's M-16 rifle and opened fire at a group of Israeli schoolgirls touring this scenic border outpost, killing seven and wounding six before being overpowered by fellow soldiers.

Witnesses said that the eighth-grade girls, aged 13 and 14, were chattering and snapping photographs when the Jordanian soldier aimed the weapon at them from an adjacent military observation tower.

Amid shouts of "madman" from his fellow soldiers, the gunman descended, firing, from the tower. Residents of this northern Jordan town offered blood and sympathy for the schoolgirls, some of the wounded were treated in a hospital near Al Shunna.

The gunman was identified as Ahmed Mousa Dakamseh, 26, father of three.

Dakamseh is a resident in Eder village, about 88 kilometers north Amman. The village still keeps some signs of the Israeli heavy raids of Sky Hawk jet fighters during the 1968 Jordanian-Israeli war.

Little was known of his motives or affiliations, but a woman identified as his mother said that her son is "mentally ill". The partially paralyzed father, Mousa Dakamseh told news agencies that "Ahmad faced a road accident which later caused psychological problems, he easily becomes disturbed and nervous." Mr. Dakamseh added "he used to be treated by psychiatrists, and he takes sedatives."

However, the father, several family members and relatives confirmed that Ahmad is a "depoliticized person." But, the gunman's motives and state of mind are still unknown.

Although no Jordanian condoned the killing of the Israeli girls, the mood in the street is that the slaughter was related to the crisis in the peace process. Jordanians believe that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's insistence on building thousands of Jewish apartments in occupied Jerusalem has fueled Arab rage. Netanyahu inspired the killing, they charge.

Sheikh Yusef Ahmad, a local elder, was quoted by Reuters as saying "Israel wanted domination, not genuine peace with its neighbors." One youth said "Netanyahu's behavior has pushed this soldier to commit this act... this was bound to happen. Israel has been encouraging this with the building of settlements."

His Majesty King Hussein condemned the shooting as a "vile crime." Several Jordanian officials have also condemned

Continued on page 2

Jordanians believe peace process on the verge of collapse

By Raed Al Abed
Star Staff Writer

THE SLAYING of seven Israeli schoolgirls by a Jordanian soldier last week highlighted what has become a sad truth here—that peace in the Middle East never quite lives up to people's expectations.

When Jordanians heard about the killing of the seven Israeli girls, the first reaction of many was to blame Israeli policies for driving the region into "inevitable violence."

"The peace process is undergoing a very serious setback. It has reached a stalemate," said Ibrahim Izziden, a former minister. "The Israeli government had stopped the process and this is not at all an opinion which is carried by the Arabs only. I think the Europeans are sharing this opinion, even the

United States is feeling how difficult it is to carry on seeing things deteriorating to this extent."

His Majesty King Hussein flew to Israel on Sunday for a series of emotional visits to the bereaved families, making a dramatic gesture of solidarity despite the growing tensions over Israeli settlements in Arab East Jerusalem. (See related story on page 2).

The visit helped defuse recent tension straining Jordanian-Israeli relations. On the popular level the visit was described as "an outpour of sympathy."

The King's visit warmed the hearts of the Israelis, but did not change the decision of their government to stop its plan to build apartments on Jabal Abu Ghneim.

"[Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu treated the gesture of the King with total disregard," said Dr. Labib Kamhawi, a political commentator. "The Israelis tried to make a propaganda bonanza out of this visit which they did and of course this strengthened Netanyahu's intransigence."

Observers believe the Palestinians never imagined that their 1993 peace accord with Israel would lead to repeated military closures and clampdowns, enlarged Jewish settlements in the West Bank and a ban on travel to Jerusalem. They envisioned a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital but instead have islands of Palestinian rule and a shrinking foothold in the holy city.

"There has been great deterioration in the process which has been established since Oslo and which the Palestinians had accepted as the bare minimum to start the process," Izziden added. "With all this you can see that Oslo itself has been revised and revised time and again to an extent that no Palestinian is finding any useful way to carry on the process."

And now Palestinians face a new hurdle to peace. Israel has decided to go ahead with construction work on a Jewish neighborhood in the Palestinian area of southeastern Jerusalem, on a hill called Jabal Abu Ghneim.

Palestinians say that Israel's unilateral decision to build pre-emptive "final status" negotiations on the fate of Jerusalem—one of the most sensitive issues in Israeli-Palestinian

peacemaking.

"The peace process depends on many factors and not only on Netanyahu," said Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber, a former foreign minister.

"First it depends on the Palestinians and their leadership, what they think and what they do and how they might react to the building settlement on mount Abu Ghneim and expanding other settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip."

It also depends on the reaction of Jordan, which has been active in bringing about the resumption of negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

His Royal Highness Prince Hassan and outgoing Prime Minister Abdel Karim Kabariti visited President Arafat in Gaza this week.

Continued on page 2

Weather Outlook

■ The weather will be partly cloudy and cold in most of the Kingdom on Thursday with temperatures reaching 8 degrees during the day and dropping to minus 2 at night. The weather will improve slightly on Friday with sunny skies, but will remain unseasonably cold (high 13, low 5). Unstable weather will dominate the beginning of the week with partly cloudy skies and moderate temperatures. Local showers are expected on Sunday and Monday. The weather should improve by mid-week with a high pressure moving in from the west.

Israelis moved by King's emotional trip

AMMAN (Star)—His Majesty King Hussein flew to Israel on Sunday for a series of emotional visits with the families of seven schoolgirls slain by a Jordanian soldier, making a dramatic gesture of solidarity despite growing tensions over Israeli construction plans in disputed East Jerusalem.

"I looked in his face and I saw that he was ashamed, and he had tears in his eyes, and he was honest," said Miri Meiri, whose daughter Yaela, 13, was one of seven eighth-grade Israeli girls who died Thursday on a class trip to a scenic overlook on the Jordanian border.

"I'm not a young girl any more. I can see the truth in people's eyes."

Visiting the family of Nurit Fatchi, another of Thursday's slain schoolgirls, her grandfather awaited the King at the apartment door with a welcoming tray of braided bread and salt. He then recited a special blessing for the King.

King Hussein, replying in the native tongue of the Yemenite Jewish family, said in Arabic: "Your daughter is like my daughter, your loss is my loss. May God help you to bear your pain."

At the home of Adi Malka, 12, the King communicated with the slain girl's parents through a sign-language interpreter. The parents, who are deaf, have said they lost their main link to the hearing world when they lost their daughter.

"I want my daughter back," said Adi's weeping mother, who fainted at one point during the visit. "We have peace, but I don't have my daughter anymore."

The King, dressed in a dark business suit and a bright red kaffiyeh headdress, replied that he would devote the rest of his life to strengthening the peace process, in order to ensure that all children enjoy peace and security.

Sunday's journey of reconciliation, in which the King allowed Netanyahu to guide him arm in arm on the touch-down of his royal jet to its departure 11 hours later, consciously aimed to repair relations and heal wounds. The King also visited two girls, wounded in Thursday's event, and Israeli President Ezer Weizman at an Israeli hospital.

Miri Meiri, the mother of 13-year-old Yaela, another victim, said the King, who was accompanied by their Royal Highnesses Prince Faisal and Princess Aisha, asked her for forgiveness on behalf of his people. "He said he was very ashamed," Meiri said, adding that he had tears in his eyes as he spoke to her.

Meiri said she asked King Hussein and Netanyahu to build a memorial on the site of the killing at Baqura in Jordan, "so the blood of these seven girls would not be in vain."

Later, during the joint news



conference with the Israeli leader, King Hussein said there are plans for a memorial, apparently including a recreational facility for children, at the site.

The King was also accompanied on his visit by Prime Minister Abdel Karim Kabariti and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Abdel Hafez Muri Kaabaneh.

At a news conference held

in West Jerusalem at the end of the visit, the King affirmed that "relations between Jordan and Israel are on their normal track, and the right track."

And yet the principal underlying dispute appeared Sunday night to be entirely unresolved. Netanyahu, after many warm words about restoring "in doubtful minds the general belief in the possibility of human friendship,"

announced that there will be no retreat in his plans to build a new Jewish neighborhood of 6,500 apartments in historically Arab East Jerusalem.

That project was the central focus of the King's charge last week that Netanyahu is bent on maneuvering "our Palestinian brethren into inevitable violent resistance" that could "bury the peace process for all times."

New Cabinet members

This is a list of cabinet members in the new government:

- 1-Dr. Abdel Salam Majali, Prime Minister, Minister of Defence.
- 2-Abdallah Nassour, Deputy Prime Minister for Service Affairs, Minister of Administrative Development.
- 3-Dr. Jawad Anani, Deputy Prime Minister for Development, Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs.
- 4-Riad Al Shakaa, Minister of Justice.
- 5-Dr. Faysal Tarawneh, Minister of Foreign Affairs.
- 6-Bassam Al Saket, Minister of Transport and Minister of Communications.
- 7-Abdel Salam Al Abbadi, Minister of Awqaf.
- 8-Dr. Rima Khalaf, Minister of Planning.
- 9-Tawfic Kreshan, Minister of Municipal, Rural Affairs and the Environment.
- 10-Munthir Al Masri, Minister of Education and Higher Education.
- 11-Nasser Al Lawzi, Minister of Public Works and Housing.
- 12-Saad Eddin Juma', Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs.
- 13-Nathier Ibrahim, Minister of Interior.
- 14-Dr. Ashraf Kurdi, Minister of Health.
- 15-Munthir Haddadin, Minister of Water and Irrigation.
- 16-Mohammad Saleh Hourani, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources.
- 17-Dr. Hani Mulqi, Minister of Trade, Industry and Minister of Supply.
- 18-Suleiman Al Hafez, Minister of Finance.
- 19-Dr. Qassem Abu Ein, Minister of Youth and Minister of Culture.
- 20-Dr. Saleh Al Khasawneh, Minister of Labor.
- 21-Mijhim Khreishah, Minister of Agriculture.
- 22-Mohammad Khair Mansar, Minister of Social Development.
- 23-Akai Beltaji, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities.
- 24-Dr. Samir Mutawa, Minister of State for Information Affairs.

Majali forms new government

Continued from page 1

national goals and maintain coordination and cooperation with the Arab countries.

Dr. Majali, on his part, responded to the King's letter by promising to strengthen the democratic process, to hold the general elections on their constitutional date, to improve social services, support the judicial system, encourage foreign investments, stamp government inefficiency, provide for a national health insurance system and carry out the programs of economic restructuring.

Observers believe the appointment of Dr. Majali is an indicator of the King's desire to push towards stronger ties with Israel. Dr. Majali will be expected to take affirmative moves towards normalization with Israel. It also means that the so-called "old guards," who had no place in Kabariti's government, are now making a strong come back.

Dr. Majali was not given ample time to compile his ministerial team, the reason being the King's planned visit to Europe on Friday. Since Parliament is in recess awaiting new elections, Dr. Majali will not be needing deputies' support or confidence vote. As far as the constitutional status of this government it will be considered as a transitional one responsible mainly for overseeing the holding of the general elections, which could take place as early as September.

Dr. Majali's previous government was criticized for failing to address domestic issues such as unemployment, poverty and official corruption. But he was credited for running a tolerant government especially in relation to the freedom of the press and strengthening democratic practices in the Kingdom.

In an exclusive interview with *The Star* one year ago, Dr. Majali defended his record as prime minister and underlined his commitment to Jordan's peace with Israel, which he helped engineer. He also talked about Arab and Muslim rights in Jerusalem, codifying journalistic ethics and his belief that confederation between Jordan and a future Palestinian entity will materialize at one point.

Jordanians demand fair trial for Dakamseh

Continued from page 1

the killing. (See related story on page 2)

However, further controversies swirled around the immediate Jordanian response to the incident. Popular sectors in Jordan, launched a broad-based campaign to ensure that Dakamseh would receive a fair and public trial.

Last Monday, anti-riot police blocked about 150 activists, representing opposition deputies, professional associations, women, activists, parties and human rights organizations, from making a solemnly visit to the soldier's family in Eder village.

Mr. Najib Al Rashdan, the head of the Arab Organization for Human Rights, who led the activists said that "We cannot isolate the incident from the ongoing atmosphere."

Opposition parties criticized the official reaction towards the incident, describing as "too much."

The Muslim Brotherhood released a statement saying that the "official stance does not represent Jordanians."

Also the Lower House opposition bloc released a statement calling on the government to stop "criminalizing" the soldier before a fair and just trial.

The government's position "contravenes the Constitution and law which state that the accused is innocent until proven guilty," the statement pointed out. "Children must be protected, no matter what their race, sex or religion, whether they are Jews, Muslims or Christians," the deputies added. "No Islamic rulings sanctions the killing of children."

but it occurred against the backdrop of extreme provocation by the Israeli decision to build a Jewish neighborhood on Jabal Abu Ghneim.

The Islamic Action Front (IAF) established a 13-lawyer committee to defend the soldier. Also the Jordanian Lawyers Association is setting up a voluntary campaign to recruit lawyers to join the defence committee.

During his joint news conference with the Israeli leader in West Jerusalem Sunday, King Hussein said there are plans to build a memorial including a recreational facility for children, on the site.

The shooting site is a popular destination for Israeli field trips and is known in Baqura as the "Island of Peace" because of its confluence between the Jordan and Yarmouk Rivers.

Jordan regained sovereignty over Baqura as part of the Jordanian-Israeli 1994 peace treaty, but it recognizes the property rights of the Ashdot Yaakov Kibbutz and granted it a 25-year lease which is renewable. Though Israelis may enter freely, with a minimum of paperwork, the treaty forbids them "to carry weapons of any kind in the area."

The gunman was arrested at the scene after fellow soldiers tackled him as he tried to change magazines. Currently he is being interrogated at the General Intelligence Dept. (GID) in Amman. The King appointed former GID director, Mohammad Rasoul Al Keilani to head the investigation.



The most prestigious bar in town was opened last week in the Middle East Hotel. The Churchill Bar will provide you with a typically English atmosphere. The bar is offering a fun Quiz Night every Wednesday at 9 pm. It will be hosted by Riyal Al Khouri and Metri Twaal and is guaranteed to set your brain to work!

Jordanians believe peace process on the verge of collapse

Continued from page 1

peace process." Dr. Abu Jaber added.

Despite warnings from security officials that construction will provoke violence and even, perhaps, a collapse of the peace process, Netanyahu's bulldozers started work at Abu Ghneim this week.

"He [Netanyahu] has set his mind to do it, and unless the Americans and the world community will move quickly to stop the Israeli government, the whole area is going to be under great difficulty," Izziien added.

However according to official sources, the King's visit unveiled that the Israelis are pinning their hopes on what they called a "compensatory package" to defuse Palestinian anger over the new construction at Jabal Abu Ghneim.

Netanyahu dispatched Maj. Gen. Shaul Mofaz to negotiate Sunday night with his Palestinian counterpart, Faysal Zeidan, over the airfield in southern Gaza Strip that Palestinians built nearly two years ago but Israel has not yet permitted them to use. Sources said Mofaz offered new concessions intended to allow Amrat to fly there in his personal plane soon.

Arafat has called on his people not to resort to violence and to protest peacefully. Netanyahu said the Palestinian leader has recently been letting out Hamas people out of jail. So far there is heightened tension in Jerusalem and in the West bank and Gaza. Israelis and Palestinians are bracing themselves for a massive outbreak of violence. This in the end will decide whether the peace process lives or not.

Broadway showtime comes to Forte Grand

Direct from London's theatre, the Forte Grand will present two full length musical shows with dinner on 21st & 22nd. The dinner/theatre shows sponsored by ANZ Grindlays Bank and British Airways, will feature a collection of favourite songs from many of the hit Broadway musical productions. The programme will include songs from South Pacific (Younger than springtime), West Side Story (Maria!) and Oklahoma (Oh! What a beautiful morning) as well as extracts from the more recent favourites such as Cats, Phantom of the Opera and Les Miserables.

The talented cast have all appeared in West End musical productions on London's stage and have recently performed in Dubai to capacity audience with their "Best of the West End" musical show. Gall Mortley and Alison Jear have both played principle roles in Les Miserables, Charles Shirrell has played principle role in Camelot, Carousal & Miss Saigon and Chris Howard in Evita, Cats, and Les Miserables. Accompanied by David Carter, Musical Director, the whole evening will be compered and directed by television actor Ian Liston.

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Analysis

End of the Kabariti era

Continued from page 1

himself and controlled his cabinet with an iron fist. Was he popular among his colleagues? Some outgoing ministers, with whom he clashed, and occasionally bossed around, would argue against this.

He was a first-class orator, improvising speeches before a divided Lower House and finally winning the day by wheeling and dealing things his way. His confidence was coupled by political shrewdness. He realized the importance of the media and used it well. In spite of the clashes his government had with many weekly newspapers, Mr. Kabariti maintained bridges of communications with young and aspiring editors.

Mr. Kabariti drew his strength from the weakness of others: namely a divided and weak opposition in Parliament. He had 22 deputies in his cabinet and could always count on the support of centrist and pro-government deputies (he won the House's confidence with 57 votes in



Kabariti

his favor).

His important achievements on the foreign policy front included restoring normal relations with Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Gulf countries—with the exception of Kuwait. Even with Kuwait, he appeared to be making headway. He maintained good contact with the Egyptians, the Palestinians and the Israelis. But was unable to improve relations with Syria and in fact relations appeared to be reaching lower levels in

recent weeks.

But he made mistakes. No one could understand the logic behind his strong attack against the Iraqi regime at a time when it appeared that Baghdad was making progress in efforts to get the major oil-for-food deal approved and when political realities in northern Iraq, and indeed in the Gulf basin, were changing in favor of the central government.

In the final days of his government, Mr. Kabariti appeared to be losing the initiative. The scandal of the state-run orphanages, new clashes with ministers and finally the Baqura incident have all put a dent in the Kabariti image. It is said that in the last few days Mr. Kabariti knew of Royal messages sent to him from the media. The most important link to the Royal Court, through Chief of the Royal Court and personal friend of Kabariti Mr. Awn Khasawneh, appeared to have been lost.

Mr. Kabariti may have got wind of what was coming when his efforts to extend the

life of the current Parliament by two more years, rather than holding fresh elections, were rebuffed. But more recently, Mr. Kabariti knew his days at the Prime Ministry were numbered when the King appointed Mr. Mohammad Rasoul Al Kilani to head the special investigation into the Baqura incident. Mr. Al Kilani was a special Royal Court advisor to the King until Mr. Kabariti requested that he be sent into retirement as he was forming his government.

On Tuesday, in the last

Upper House session, Mr. Kabariti delivered what is now considered as his farewell speech. He sought one main topic, for which he wanted the country to remember him by; and that is his commitment to the democratic process. He attacked those who speak of democracy but are unable to practice it. His government, he said, did not engage in slogans and speeches but went into details and sought to link people's rights with their responsibilities.

Again, the Kabariti style of delivering a message was omnipresent. His choice of the theme of democracy was subtle and effective. In his last public appearance, Mr. Kabariti wanted to rise above the controversies of his rule and walk out as a statesman—and he did.

Palestinians escalate protest as Israel breaks ground in Abu Ghneim

Continued from page 1

ber. Several said they feared the situation, perceived by both sides as a struggle for Jerusalem, could spiral out of control.

"It is a black day for the peace process," said Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu strongly defended the decision to launch construction, telling reporters the Jewish state has the right and the obligation to build in Jerusalem, despite the risk of violence.

"I will not sacrifice Jerusalem ... to rescind only for a moment terrorist threats," he said.

Netanyahu also accused Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat of giving Palestinian militants the go-ahead for violent attacks

against Israel in response to the project, a statement flatly denied by Palestinian officials.

The building plans, already condemned by the international community, garnered more criticism Tuesday. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Washington noted that President Clinton has said publicly he wished Israel had not opted for the project. Albright called on both sides to return to the bargaining table.

Jordan also urged that the construction be stopped and negotiations resume. Soon after the bulldozers began to cut wide swaths into the rocky hill, Arafat issued a statement, broadcast on local radio, asking Palestinians to refrain from violent confrontations.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The Canadian Government is interested in entering into a residential lease with a Jordanian company or firm wishing to construct a build-to-suit Villa of 520.0 m² in gross area, on a parcel of land averaging 2,000.0 m² to be situated in Abdoun, Al-Diyar or Al-Swaifiyah which will serve as the new Canadian Official Residence in Amman, Jordan.

Interested parties are asked to contact the Canadian Embassy at the Pearl of Shmeisani Building (4th Floor) Shmeisani, Amman between the hours of 10:00 and 15:00 to obtain a free copy of a briefing document explaining the basic requirements expected for the new Villa.

Expressions of interest should be received at the Canadian Embassy by no later than 15:00 on the 27th day of March, 1997.

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JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

Prince says judiciary is in danger

HRH Crown Prince Hassan says that judicial institutions must undergo a process of reform to ensure that the judiciary remains independent. In a letter to the Judicial Council, the Prince said that there was a need to remove all negative obstacles in the way of the development of the judiciary. In a speech at the Judicial College given on his behalf by the then Prime Minister Abdel Karim Al Kahariti, Prince Hassan said that the Jordanian judiciary is going through a dangerous period that requires urgent attention. He said there was a need for a judicial review of all legal institutions to ensure that they remain independent and not affected by favoritism, regionalism and religious and political intolerance. However, the Prince pointed out these are all diseases that would affect any institution. Prince Hassan's speech was on the occasion of the graduation of would-be young lawyers from the Judicial College.



Prince Hassan

Dumping waste!

People are just beginning to realize that the Jordan River is being polluted thanks to Israel's northern settlements. We are told that they have been dumping their sewerage and waste into the Jordan River. For a change, the Israelis have not denied such reports. During the last Jordan-Israel Environment Committee meeting that took place in Amman this week, Israeli officials promised that they would now help to provide waste water treatment to purify the Jordan River. But how long has this been going on may we ask? Surely the Israeli government knew what their settlers were up to and should have acted much earlier. Water pollution could cause tremendous health problems for the population and it should in no way be played down.

New era for Islamists at UJ

The Islamist trend has one massively in the student elections held at the University of Jordan (UJ) earlier this week. This is the seventh consecutive win for the Islamists who now control the student councils of all UJ scientific and arts colleges. These include the departments of medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, agriculture, engineering, Sharia, arts and the college of commerce. The Islamists' landslide is being attributed to the fact that they are better organized than all of the other political groups in the university. It is pointed out that their win does not have any political/religious overtones, but Islamists, as one might expect would strongly disagree.

Electricity workers send message to King

The Electricity Workers Union (EWU) sent a letter recently to His Majesty King Hussein pleading the case of the electricity workers. The head of the EWU, Khalifeh Al Ma'aita said that the electricity workers were given the best incentives, during the reign of King Abdallah, however, these were taken away over the years. He said that the recent strike by the electricity workers was because of frustration over pay and low conditions. Al Ma'aita added that the management of the Electricity Co. is now trying to cancel the health insurance system and severance pay which gives workers the right to an annual salary of 56 months.

Al Mithaq is given license

We will have yet another one on the newsstands. Honestly, how much more can we take. However, this is a democracy, and people can do what they like. Well almost all! This week the government has given its blessing to one more weekly newspaper. *Al Mithaq* is a political weekly that hopes to give everything that is new in Jordanian politics. However, we have to wait and see to judge the real content.

Amin becomes Secretary General of Information Ministry

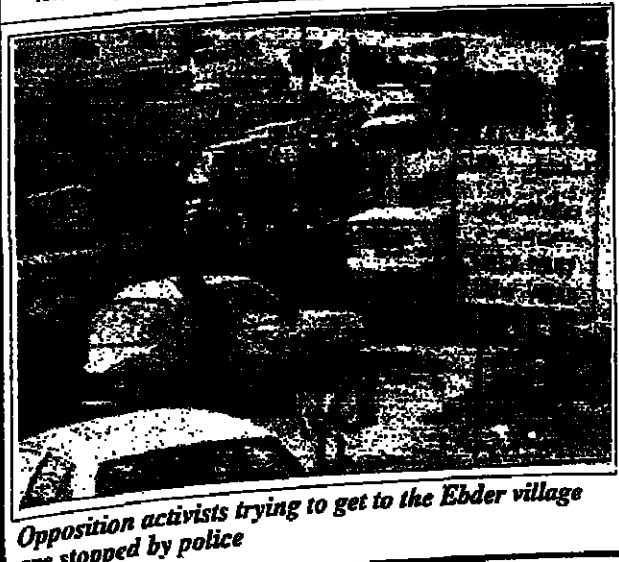
Mohammad Amin, the Director-General of the Press and Publications Dept., has been officially appointed as the new secretary general of the Ministry of Information. This is one of the last acts of the Kabariti government. The Press and Publications Department of the Ministry of Information is now vacant, but it is anybody's guess as to who will occupy the post.



Amin

Delegation refused entry to Ebder village

A 100-man delegation of lawyers, trade unions and political activists were refused entry into the Ebder village in Irbid to see the family of Ahmed Al Dakamseh, the man who shot seven Israeli girls last Thursday. The delegation, which wanted to show support for the family of the soldier, was stopped by police officers five kilometers from the village. It included newly-re-elected President of the Jordan Lawyers Association, Hussein Mjalli and Najeeb Al Rashdan, the head of the Arab Human Rights Organization. Mjalli confirmed that a number of lawyers had volunteered to defend Al Dakamseh. The police told Al Rashdan, the head of the delegation, that he alone would be allowed to see the family, but Al Rashdan would be refused saying that the purpose of the visit was to send a message of support to the family. He underlined that while the delegation condemns the killing of innocent children, however, there is a wider perspective to this. He said Israeli aggression on the Arab nation continues till this day.



Opposition activists trying to get to the Ebder village are stopped by police

Row brews in JWA over attendance to Birzeit conference

Star Staff Writer

Cultural normalization may now be a quaint old phrase. Yet for many, it is still alive, well and kicking. "We don't want to normalize," is a frequent statement that is echoed by many Jordanian writers.

Indeed, trouble could once again be brewing in the Jordan Writers Association (JWA) over the very mechanism of normalization. The subject being whether or not to attend the First Palestinian Book Conference that is held in Birzeit, Ramallah, between 22 till 26 March.

Whilst in their last meeting, JWA took a vote not to attend the conference on the ground that it would pave the way for cultural normalization with Israel, other writers are having second thoughts and are actively thinking of

attending the five-day event. If they do then this would be an unprecedented milestone.

What is even more surprising however, is that the General Secretary of the JWA, Ibrahim Al Abassi, who days earlier condemned the conference later said that he would be attending in his personal capacity. This has created what can only be termed as a flurry of turbulent activity among the writer's body, the majority of whom stood against any form of contacts at least on the official level.

This is on the ground that it would create a wedge on the anti-normalization front in Jordan and the Arab world.

But this is not how it is seen on the other side of the river. The General Union of Palestinian Writers (GUPW), who are the organizers of the

conference think otherwise. GUPW officials believe that such Jordanian and Arab attendance would help to ameliorate the isolation that Palestinian writers in the Occupied Territories feel. They say that it would re-establish a vital bridge between Palestinian writers and their Arab counterparts.

PWA secretary Izzat Ghazawi admitted that the conference is aimed at the "formation of a moderate cultural dialogue" where intellectuals can air their different point of views.

But it seems that Arab intellectuals and writers are in no mood to listen. They say that their attendance would only mean the thin end of the wedge. The wall of anti-normalization that have been built in the Arab world

and remained surprisingly strong up till now could start to crumble.

Such attendance they argue would give credence to Israeli policies of occupation. As always, the first line of defence was from Egyptian writers who rejected out of hand participation in the venue.

Again their feeling, like the majority of their Jordanian colleagues was that it would open the way for cultural normalization with Israel.

Egyptian intellectuals have long refused to normalize with Israel despite the Camp David Agreement of 1978. This state of affairs continues today across the Arab world with many Arab intellectuals refusing to have any contact with their Israeli counterparts.

Attendance to the conference is also rejected by the General Union of Arab Writers (GUAW) and intellectuals who in a strongly-worded statement issued earlier this week said that the invitation to attend would be accepting Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories that were taken in 1967.

The Birzeit conference titled "A Modern View for a Modern Period" was carefully chosen to reflect the change of the times. However, this is seen as an insult in the light of Israeli intransigence and extremism in the peace process. Writers are arguing that nothing is changing, but on the contrary, the policies of Likud Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu are very extremist to say the least.

Fakhari Quwar, general secretary of the JWA, told *The Star* that there must be a strong stand against cultural normalization and this is what we expect from the Palestinian Writers' Union. He said that attending the Birzeit conference would be like going to Israel.

Arab writers see themselves as holding the fort in the light of what they see as weakness in Arab stand. The majority argue that such attendance would help maintain the Israel status quo in the Occupied Territories.

However, while there is a strong stand against normalization, certain cracks are likely to develop in the long run. Jamal Naji, a Jordanian author, has already said that he would be attending, but literary critic Fakhri Saleh, who was to give a paper to the conference, has been denied entry into the West Bank by the Israeli authorities.

This is really a twist in the tail. His denial is being seen by the anti-normalization lobby as a vindication of their views.

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Business scene

Jordanian and Gulf businessmen are studying feasibility of launching a touristic investment projects in Jordan at an estimated cost of JD 50 million.

The Jordanian-Gulf Joint Group seeks to make this touristic enterprise one of a kind in the region. This project which covers an average of 50,000 square meters on includes playgrounds, restaurants and entertainment halls. Its initial costs are about JD 3.5 million. There is also another project which involves houses swimming pools, and villas to be built along the Dead Sea covering 61,000 square metres at initial costs of JD 10 million.

The draft securities law is expected to be approved by the government soon and issued temporarily to meet all requirements concerning attracting foreign investments. According to this law, the minimum ratio of subscribed capital for public shareholding companies will be reduced to JD 100,000 and these companies are obliged to pay their capital in one installment. The founders of companies are also permitted to own 75% of the capital (this was not allowed before). Such a law cuts red tape. Companies would be able to register in front of a lawyer and not through the Ministry of Trade and Industry as is currently the case.

To maintain stability in companies performance the number of directors in a company with limited liability is increased from 2-5 persons to 2-7 persons and their term is extended from two to four years.

The Jordan Investment Corp. invited 80 local, Arab and international specialized companies to submit offers for the management and investment in the Maan Touristic Resort.

These concerns are being asked to spend about \$5 million to develop and expand the resort and supply it with modernized equipment to meet similar systems in international resorts. March 25 was fixed as the final date for receiving offers of companies. Until now 19 concerns submitted offers. Final agreement in this regard is expected to be concluded by next June.

Foreign Exchange

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US\$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1432	1.1489
DM	0.4152	0.4173
SP	0.4772	0.4796
FRF	0.1231	0.1237
YEN (100)	0.5678	0.5706
DEM	0.3699	0.3717
LYT (100)	0.0421	0.0423

Jordan -Saudi Arabia relations could be nucleus for a pan-Arab economic bloc

By Iham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

WITH THE aim of establishing sound economic co-operation among Arab states, Jordan and Saudi Arabia are paying intensive efforts to bolster pan-Arab ties in all fields and make the Arab dream of economic unity come true.

In its latest meeting, the Economic and Social Council of the Arab League approved establishing an Arab Free Trade Zone to facilitate inter-Arab trade exchange. A program was set up to carry out this agreement and reduce customs fees and charges by 10 percent over 10 years.

However, Minister of Trade and Industry, Ali Abul Ragheb said that Arab countries can take the initiative and work to finalize bilateral agreements and achieve more openness and co-ordination on a smaller scale as an initial step.

Last Sunday, a meeting was convened at the Amman Chamber of Commerce between the Jordanian and Saudi economic businessmen who are doing their utmost to boost levels of co-operation and trade exchange between Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

This is the time that the private sector undertakes the full responsibility to have a decisive role in enhancing formal protocol and trade deals between countries.

At the opening of the first Expo for Saudi products in Amman last Saturday, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti described Jordanian-Saudi relations as excellent and stressed that Saudi Arabia has a major role in making inter-Arab economic and commercial ties as the basis for greater economic integration.

About 70 Saudi companies are taking part in the Expo, displaying their highly com-

petitive and standardized products.

According to the Jordanian-Saudi trade protocol 100 commodities are exempted from customs tariffs between the two countries.

While the volume of inter-Arab trade exchange does not exceed eight percent, the burden lies on the private sector to strengthen greater ties, bilateral exhibitions and more economic openness. These issues are now given special importance in view of the global strategy to establish international free zones and meet the requirements for economic liberalization to join the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Abul Ragheb stressed that the Arab investment climate has never been as mature and convenient as today. Many Arab industrial products are witnessing noticeable development by utilizing high technology that has become a measure to monitor high quality according to international standards and specifications.

The trade exchange between Jordan and Saudi Arabia has shot up last year as Jordanian exports to Saudi Arabia rose from JD 7.03 million in 1995 to JD 113.4 million.

The size of the trade exchange between them reached JD 200 million in 1996.

This indicates that Saudi Arabia has become a major trade partner with Jordan.

Jordanian imports from Saudi Arabia were JD 83.5 million in 1996. Jordanian exports to Saudi Arabia in the 1992-1995 period hovered at an annual ratio of JD 70-80 million, while our imports were between JD 39-91 million.

The Saudi Minister of Industry and Electricity, Dr Hashem Al Yamani said he appreciated the role of the Jo-



Trade Minister Abul Ragheb with Saudi Electricity Minister Al Yamani in a meeting at Amman's Chamber of Commerce

rdanian government in supporting and encouraging the first Saudi trade exhibition in Amman.

The 40-member Saudi delegation showed much concern in setting up a long term trade partnership that serves the interests of both countries.

Al Yamani described the Expo "Made in Saudi Arabia" as a step on the track to boost economic and commercial ties between Jordanian and Saudi businessmen, increase the size of trade exchange and promote Saudi products in Jordan.

He also welcomed organizing exhibitions for Jordanian products in Saudi Arabia and stressed his country's full support for such activities.

Al Yamani stated that "we are seeking a real partnership

with Jordan, as we can work together to reach the Palestinian market.

The chairman of the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Trade and Industry, Haidar Murad said the Saudi visit was especially significant because it constitutes the first step to revive a joint Arab effort to build an Arab economic bloc based on integration in resources and co-ordination to meet global challenges.

The chairman of the Saudi Council for Chambers of Trade and Industry, Hamad Bin Abdullah Al Zamel pointed out that the meeting of Saudi businessmen and investors with their Jordanian counterparts bridges means of co-operation between the two countries.

He continued to say that holding exhibitions in Arab countries is a way to promote Arab products and enable consumers to be acquainted with the high quality of these products. Such co-ordination is considered as a must in this critical situation that is influenced by economic, regional and world-wide developments affecting the course of development and investment in the Arab World.

Economic performance in Saudi Arabia has been distinguished by growth and expansion in all productive fields. Reports estimate an 8.6 percent growth in Gross domestic product (GDP) in 1996 compared with only 4.3 percent in 1995.

Mexico is out of the danger zone

By Ernesto Zedillo

MEXICO IS emerging from one of the most daunting challenges in its recent history. The country has been tested by a genuine economic emergency, but it has recovered as a result of wholehearted and firm determination on the part of its citizens.

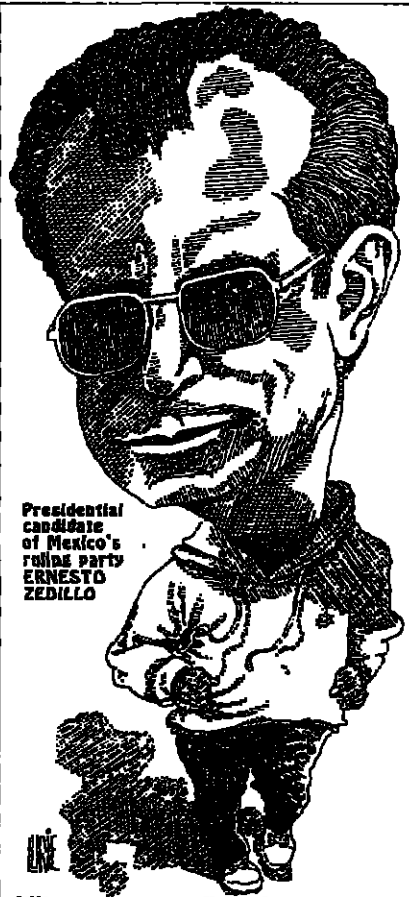
After the December 1994 financial crisis, Mexico's economy was saddled with a \$29 billion current account deficit—equal to almost eight percent of the nation's gross domestic product—and a short-term debt that totaled more than \$40 billion.

While this dealt a significant blow to the economy, there has been a meaningful improvement in Mexico's trade balance, largely because of a steady increase in exports. In 1995 this improvement totaled almost \$26 billion. Mexico's current account is now close to equilibrium. This year, external public-debt payments will be one-third of what they were last year, and means for funding have already been found. Inflation and interest rates have declined substantially, and the peso is once again stable.

Mexico's international reserves have increased fourfold since January 1995 to a total of almost \$16 billion.

For the Mexican people—who have shown enormous resilience in the face of contraction not just of the

national economy but of their own standard of living—there are promising signs of job growth. In the first eight and a half months of 1996, the economy has added 417,000 jobs.



President of Mexico's relief party ERNESTO ZEDILLO

August 1996.

All jobs lost during the hardest period of the economic emergency—between January and August 1995—have been recovered. New and more productive jobs have been created.

In the second quarter of 1996, the gross domestic product has expanded by more than seven percent from the level at which it lingered during the same period in 1995.

World financial markets and institutions have responded to Mexico's comeback, and Mexico has been able to return to global markets much sooner than expected.

After the debt crisis of 1982, Mexico did not return to international capital markets for seven years. But after the peso crisis of 1994, the nation was back in these markets within six months.

In 1995 Mexico issued \$4.7 billion in sovereign bonds. This year so far, it has issued \$3.9 billion in bonds with longer terms and more favorable conditions.

Yet Mexico's recovery, no matter how remarkable, will remain transitional without fundamental reform of the nation's financial institutions and policies.

Direct government participation in the economy has been sharply cut. In the mid-1980s, government spending was 45 percent of the gross domestic product. It

now accounts for less than 25 percent.

Mexico has transformed into a market economy with a hard-working, increasingly well-educated work force and a thriving private sector.

As a result, the annual growth in manufacturing productivity during the past decade averaged 5.7 percent—almost twice as high as the 3.2 percent productivity growth experienced by Mexico's main trading partner, the United States.

Mexico's average annual growth rate in non-oil exports during the past 10 years has been greater than that of developed nations such as Japan, Germany and the United States. It has also grown faster than some of the so-called East and Southeast Asian tigers, such as Singapore and South Korea.

In spite of last year's financial difficulties, Mexico has remained one of the world's major destinations for foreign direct investment.

During the past two years, \$15 billion was invested in Mexico, one of the highest levels of any emerging economy.

Mexico can proudly claim that, in 1995, it exported more than \$30 billion in automobiles and transport equipment. But these gains, however substan-

tial, will remain transitory in the absence of far-reaching reform and improvement of the nation's economic institutions.

One of Mexico's most important reforms is the creation of a new social security system to replace the current pay-as-you-go procedure with individual, fully-funded capitalizing retirement accounts, managed by an array of private investment funds.

This new system should become a powerful source of long-term capital to finance investment and a major stimulus for development of our financial markets and institutions.

Amid the difficult circumstances Mexico faced in 1995, the nation's officials continued to promote regulatory, legal and even constitutional changes, in the hope of bolstering efficiency across a wide spectrum of economic activity.

Opening the Mexican market is not a goal that can be accomplished in isolation.

Instead, it is one embedded in a broader philosophy of political and economic liberalization, a philosophy which is supporting the foundations of the nation's economic recovery and its recent democratic reforms.

The current administration has embarked on a program of

institutional reform designed to strengthen the rule of law, deepen democracy through greater balance among the three branches of government, and reaffirm pluralism and accountability.

One step has been to strengthen the judicial branch so that all citizens may turn to the courts with confidence and be certain that legal claims and trials will be dealt with promptly, efficiently and in strict compliance with the law.

A bill sent to and approved by Congress has reinforced the integrity and constitutional powers of the Supreme Court, established guarantees for the independence of all judges, put in place a new system of judicial appointment and widened the scope of the judiciary's authority.

To strengthen Mexico's democracy, there have been a series of constitutional amendments concerning electoral practices and procedures.

All four national political parties represented in Congress participated freely and equally in determining the agenda for the political reforms. And with the unanimous support of both houses of Congress, the initiatives can claim a legitimacy that previous reforms efforts in Mexico had never enjoyed.

It is in the interest of all Mexicans to preserve the instruments of the full democratic process. The political and economic progress of the past year would not have been possible without the wholehearted and firm determination of many Mexicans, both inside and outside the public sector.

But the support of multilateral financial institutions and the nation's global partners also played an indispensable role.

While no one can deny the severity of the difficulties that Mexico has suffered in the past few years, the nation has managed to weather the storm by building strong foundations for the inseparable aims of democracy and prosperity.

Today Mexico is designing economic policies to ensure lasting recovery and dynamic growth, and the nation has adopted the sound political reforms essential to those aims.

With the aid of the global community, Mexico's modernization and development, difficult though it may be, will remain certain.

Ernesto Zedillo is president of Mexico. This article is adapted from a longer version in the Harvard International Review.

America West Airlines appoint Discover the World Marketing

AMERICA WEST Airlines, has signed an agreement with Discover the World Marketing of Amman to handle the airline's reservations, sales and marketing activities in Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon as of 1 April. This is for a three-year term, and Mr Hani Suleiman of World Marketing is now the regional director for America West Airlines in these countries.

According to John R. Gare, America West Airlines' senior vice president, marketing and sales, "This new agreement will give America West Airlines immediate access to the Jordanian market through Discover the World Marketing and will explore the possibility to develop America West's business in the other markets. We are very enthusiastic about the relationship with Discover the World Marketing and America West Airlines' access to another important international market."

"This appointment is most welcome and appropriate in light of the growing interest in leisure and business travel to and from the United States and Canada said Mr Suleiman. It

nically complements other major travel companies which are currently represented by Discover the World Marketing in Jordan such as US Airways, British Midland, AeroMexico, Premier cruise lines and Telekey Incorporation.

America West Airlines is a major carrier based in Phoenix, Arizona, where it is the dominant airline operating. America West has hubs at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, Las Vegas and port Columbus (Ohio) Int'l Airport. The Airlines modern, fuel efficient fleet, which has an average age of less than 10 years, consists of a total of 53 Airbus A320s, Boeing 737s and Boeing 737s.

Founded by Edward R. Beauvais, America West is a product of the deregulated US airline industry, the carrier initiated service in 1983. With three aircraft and 280 employees, America West grew rapidly, and by 1990 it achieved major-airline status, with annual revenues of over \$1 billion.



most major destinations across the United States, with additional destinations in Mexico and Canada. America West utilizes its Phoenix, Las Vegas a Columbus hubs as gateways for travel throughout its route network. The Airline's Columbus mini-hub helps to provide a balanced national route system with strength on both coasts.

America West enhances its operational strength through strategic alliances and code share agreements with other domestic and international airlines such as AeroMexico, Bri-

ish Airways, Continental Airlines, Mesa Air group and North West Airlines.

In February 1996, America West launched a major two year growth plan, which is generating an expansion of service at the Airline's Phoenix and Las Vegas hubs. The plan is scheduled to be implemented in two stages. When fully implemented, the plan will increase America West's total departures by 17 percent and add at least nine new cities to the airline's route system.

MARKET WATCH

15-18 March

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car Union JIBCO Middle East Complex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Middle East Complex United Investment Bank Arab Financial Investments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan Yogurt Alabi National Bank JIBCO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan Yogurt Alabi National Bank Leventock & Poultry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chemical Industry Universal Chemical Industry Bank of Jordan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Security East for Project Universal Industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> East for Project Batana Investment Paper Industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Middle East Complex Jordan Investment East for Project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Price Pointer Trade Volume Stock Volume 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Price Pointer Trade Volume Stock Volume 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Price Pointer Trade Volume Stock Volume 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Price Pointer Trade Volume Stock Volume

Israel is renegading on promises, Arabs say

By Rebecca Trounson

JERUSALEM—Anwar Jayusi waved an arm toward the garbage cascading down a slope near his home and said he could not help but be skeptical of Israeli promises to improve neighborhoods like his in East Jerusalem.

In nearly 30 years of occupation, said Jayusi, a Palestinian house painter who lives with his family near the trash-strewn hill, "we have not received anything from Israel. Why should we believe them now?" Jayusi lives in Abu Tor, a neighborhood of rundown Arab apartments near luxurious Jewish enclaves that is one of 10 mostly Arab sections of Jerusalem designated to receive government funds to repair rutted roads and aging sewer lines.

The Israeli government made the announcement 26 February, pairing the pledge for Arab areas with its approval of a new Jewish neighborhood in East Jerusalem, the historically Arab side of the disputed city.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu even visited Abu Tor, declaring his commitment to upgrade the area as he stood beside a pile of unloaded building materials. "It's not a ploy," the Israeli leader said of the promise.

But Palestinians, and some Israelis, say it is—or that, at best, it represents an extremely rosy view of the realities of Arab housing in East Jerusalem.

The reasons, they say, include history, politics and bureaucracy, all of which indicate that Abu Tor and other mostly Arab areas of Jerusalem will remain much as they are today, even as ground-breaking for the new Jewish neighborhood takes place within weeks.

"Let's assume that there really is the political will and intention to go forward

with these plans," said Sarah Kaminker, a former Jerusalem City Council member and veteran city planner. "But there are so many ways we prevent Arabs from building in Jerusalem (that) it just won't happen."

The Netanyahu government has repeatedly linked the Jewish and Arab projects, portraying them as a model of a "peaceful coexistence" within the city, both aimed at alleviating housing shortages for their target populations.

At a news conference to announce the decisions, Netanyahu said the government plans to construct 2,500 Jewish homes—the first phase of a 6,500-unit project—and "to build a total of 3,015 apartments" in 10 Arab neighborhoods.

But the government later acknowledged that it was not actually planning to build the Arab homes, only to spend about \$40 million to prepare the areas for private construction—paving roads, building sidewalks and installing sewage and water lines.

A spokeswoman for the Jerusalem municipality said that she did not know whether the permit process will be expedited for Arabs wishing to build once the infrastructure is complete.

For the Jewish project, on a hill known as Har Homa to Israelis and Jabal Abu Ghneim to Arabs, the government has taken ownership of the land, divided it into parcels and drawn up a plan for the neighborhood. Each step of the zoning and permit process is likely to be expedited, with financial incentives to contractors and future residents, former city officials said.

Equating the plans for Har Homa and for the Arab districts is "like throwing dust in the eyes," said Amir Cheshin, who worked as an adviser on Arab affairs to former Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek. "The leaders are misleading the public."

There is nothing the same in these two proposals.

To understand the realities of East Jerusalem, Cheshin said, it is necessary to understand the various ways Israel has sought to consolidate its hold on the eastern half of the city since capturing it from Jordan in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

Through the years, Israel has expropriated more than one-third of East Jerusalem, mostly from private Arab owners, according to Palestinian and Israeli human rights groups. The land, about 5,800 acres, was expropriated for "public purposes," according to government records researched by the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem.

Since then, Israeli governments representing both the Labor and Likud parties have built more than 38,500 housing units for Jews on the expropriated land. None have been built for Arabs—despite an Arab housing shortage estimated in a 1992 study for the Jerusalem municipality at 21,000 units.

Through a series of regulations, Israel also has severely restricted the ability of Arabs to build within the city and demolished hundreds of homes built without permits.

Cheshin and others said the building restrictions are part of a municipal strategy intended to keep the Palestinian population from growing at a rate faster than that of the Jews.

Israeli leaders, including Netanyahu and Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert, make no secret of their intention to hold on to all of Jerusalem as the eternal, undivided capital of the Jewish state—a position most Israelis say they share. And even Palestinian officials acknowledge that Israel has now succeeded in achieving a small Jewish majority in East Jerusalem.

Within Arab neighborhoods, Israel

restricts growth through zoning plans that shrink the available land by designating large "green areas" where owners cannot build. Other areas are marked on "town planning schemes" as available for building, but only if all who own the land within the boundaries agree to set aside a certain parcel for a school or other public purpose.

About 170 building permits are granted for Palestinian housing each year, Kaminker said, compared with about 3,000 for Jews.

In Issawiya, an Arab neighborhood of about 8,000 near the Hebrew University campus on Mount Scopus, residents say an average of three building permits has been granted each year since 1990, when Issawiya's planning scheme was finally approved. Under the government's latest proposal, an additional 500 homes are to be allowed, but no one seems especially hopeful.

Instead, local leaders like Darwish Darwish reminisce about the days before the Israeli occupation, when Issawiya's land area was recognized by the Jordanians as about 2,500 acres. By 1990, Israel had expropriated all but 500 acres. Now, "we have only 660 dunams"—about 165 acres—where building is permitted, lamented Darwish, a member of the local building committee.

Across a narrow valley, on land once owned in part by Issawiya residents, stands the Israeli community of French Hill, its eight-story, hillside apartment buildings and landscaped streets a stark contrast to the low-rise homes and mostly unpaved roads of Issawiya.

"We pay our taxes too, but what do we get?" asked Mohammed Mahmoud, another building committee member, as he gazed across at French Hill. "We don't get the same services."



A student from Bethlehem planting an olive tree on Jabal Abu Ghneim while Israeli soldiers look on

Kaminker and Cheshin said the current Israeli promises to improve conditions for Jerusalem's Arab residents reminded them of two other neighborhoods in northern Jerusalem.

In the early 1980s, Israel expropriated about 1,000 acres from the Arab neighborhood of Beit Hanina to build the Jewish community of Pisgat Zeev. In exchange, Israeli government officials promised to allow the construction of 18,000 homes in Beit Hanina, roughly the same number that it planned for Pisgat Zeev.

But over the years, Kaminker said, as Pisgat Zeev went from blueprints to reality, the regional planning commission gradually reduced the number of additional apartments allowed for Beit Hanina—from 18,000 to 11,000, and then to 7,500.

More than 15 years later, no apartments for Arabs have been built.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Coptic assault renews anxiety among Christian minority

By John Daniszewski

MINYA, Egypt—The Rev. Elyea Komoss was seated in the confession room when the low murmurs inside the Mar Girgis Church where a weekly meeting of young Coptic Christians was in progress were replaced by the jarring staccato of machine-gun fire.

"I opened the door and found everyone running about," the Coptic priest recounted, last Friday. "There were two girls who had been shot in the back. I pulled them inside. Another man shot in the back was calling out to me. 'Help me, Father,' so I pulled him inside too."

"By then, the assailants had run outside and continued shooting in the street. The scene

inside the church was very hard. ... We found ourselves in a pool of blood. It looked like a slaughterhouse."

The attack by Islamic extremists in Abu Qurqas about 15 miles south of here killed nine people and left five wounded last Wednesday evening. It was the worst assault by Muslim extremists against the country's Coptic Christian minority in five years—in May 1992, 12 Copts were killed in another attack in the region—and the first to take place inside a church.

The toll mounted last Friday when three Christians were found slain in sugar cane fields in the nearby village of El Zuheir. Police speculated that they had been killed by the same gunmen.

The attacks would seem to contradict the government's repeated assertions that it has eradicated all but a few vestiges of the armed militants who say they want to establish an Islamic state in Egypt, a key U.S. ally that is generally seen as a stabilizing force in the Middle East.

But some analysts also saw the attack as a sign of the extremists' weakness. "In the last few years, the militants have been really squeezed by the security forces," said Hala Moustafa, a specialist on Egypt's extremist groups at Al Ahram Center for Strategic Studies in Cairo. "An operation such as this one was easy to carry out, it would attract a lot of attention, and at the same time it is not a direct confrontation with the government."

According to the Rev. Macarios Youssef, another priest at the church, five masked gunmen were involved. One remained in the street, one posted himself at the door, and the other three fired randomly at the 40 or so people inside the church. They stayed half a minute before fleeing on foot, he said.

"I would like to state that we live in love and compassion with our Muslim brothers," Youssef added in a telephone interview. "(The attackers are) a strange tumor on our society."

Egyptian security forces immediately threw up a cordon around Abu Qurqas, stationing tanks and armored cars at churches. At least 79 people were rounded up as security forces sought clues, according to news agency reports.

As one indication of the tension in the area, police barred a reporter from getting within several miles of the church Thursday. In fact, they provided an armed escort for two-thirds of the 150-mile journey back to Cairo.

In an interview last month with the *Los Angeles Times*, Interior Minister Hassan Alfi, who has masterminded the four-year crackdown on the militants, declared, "The security forces have total control of the situation."

But the edginess of police near Minya, a hotbed of the militants, seemed to suggest that a danger still exists.

The Abu Qurqas attack was denounced widely. "Villainous, cowardly and low," Muhammad Tantawi, sheikh of the Al Azhar Mosque and Egypt's leading Muslim religious authority, said in his weekly sermon Friday.

According to unofficial estimates, more than 70 Copts have been slain by extremists in recent years. Islamic extremists consider the Christian Copts to be heretics. But most of their violence has been waged against the police and army.

Egypt's Coptic minority makes up 10 percent of the population of 62 million, and its history predates Islam in Egypt. The Coptic Christians trace their church to only a few years after

the death of Christ.

Although Copts and Muslims have coexisted mostly in peace since the Arab conquest of Egypt in A.D. 641, in recent years the Christians have become a dwindling minority. With the increase in attacks on Christians by Islamic militants and an official atmosphere that often appears to equate devotion to Islam with patriotism, some Copts quietly have changed their religion or emigrated.

Police suspect Gamal Al Islamiya, or the Islamic Group, in the attack. It is the largest and most active of the factions that have declared war on President Hosni Mubarak's government.

More than 1,000 people—mainly militants and police officers—have died since the campaign of political violence began in 1992.

But the massive crackdown, including hundreds of arrests of people suspected of sympathizing with the extremists and trials with harsh sentences handed down by special military courts, has resulted in a sharp decline in incidents and casualties in the past two years.

With these killings, however, the old feeling of anxiety has returned to haunt Egypt's Christian minority.

"Too many attacks have occurred," said Maurice Sadik, a lawyer and Coptic activist in Cairo. "There is a clear security failure."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Once a godsend, foreign influx now a bane for Israel

By Rebecca Trounson

TEL AVIV—Inside a cave-like bar near the old central bus station in Tel Aviv, more than a dozen Romanian men drink beer and gaze listlessly at the pornography playing on a flickering television.

A few blocks away, up a trash-strewn stairwell, a pristine, whitewashed church awaits the arrival of its Nigerian and Ghanaian faithful for evening prayers.

Outside, among the peep shows and cheap shoe stores lining the Neve Shalom pedestrian walkway, pay-per-minute telephone shops display their rates for India, Jamaica, Chile, Turkey, Tajikistan.

To many Israelis, the international face of this seedy section of south Tel Aviv represents a social and economic problem potentially more dangerous than the two small bombs that exploded here last month, injuring several people. "If we continue in this way, allowing foreigners in without any controls, this will be a disaster for Israel," said Yigal Ben-Shalom, director general of the Israeli labor ministry. "We have to stop."

Thousands of foreigners have been allowed into Israel since 1993 as a substitute for Palestinian laborers kept out by the closures of the West Bank and Gaza Strip that were a response to attacks against Israelis. Many entered on

short-term contracts; others, arrived as tourists or Christian pilgrims, then stayed illegally.

The influx of many Israelis today over the foreigners in their midst represents a sea change from the relief that greeted the workers' arrival. The solution to one problem has created several others.

With progress in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and growing anxiety over the flood of foreigners, Israel is taking steps to slash their numbers and ease the closure of the territories.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, speaking recently at an international conference in Switzerland, said his government plans to reduce by half the number of foreign workers in Israel and increase the number of Palestinian laborers.

Palestinian officials said they welcomed the change but noted that the vast majority of the two million residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip still are not allowed to visit or work in Israel. The closure has created economic hardship, with unemployment in Gaza at about 60 percent, according to Palestinian and UN officials.

In recent months, the number of Palestinians permitted to work in Israel has risen slowly, from about 32,000 in August to 50,000 today. Those granted entrance—married workers over the age of 35 who have clean security records—are

considered least likely to carry out a terrorist attack. But the figure is far below the 160,000 Palestinians employed in Israel before the ban.

"The most important thing is that the closure is still in force," said Nabil Abu Rudaineh, a spokesman for Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat. "Israeli leaders are making these statements, but on the ground nothing is being done."

For the most part, Israelis supported the security measures and applauded when the government also announced a short-term policy of replacing Arabs with foreigners, mostly Eastern Europeans and Asians. For farmers and contractors, the newcomers provided a reliable labor source unaffected by the closure. For the public, shaken by kidnappings and shootings that left 15 Israelis dead in March 1993, they spelled a release from fear.

But nearly four years later, foreign enclaves are mushrooming in many neighborhoods, particularly in the poorer areas of south Tel Aviv, and along with the excessive drinking and prostitution evident in areas frequented by foreign workers, Israelis lately have become uncomfortably aware of the inhumane living and working conditions forced on many of the immigrants by their Israeli employers.

Many, like Stoyan Yonel, a Romanian with a broad, open face who knows a smattering of Hebrew, are housed six or more to a single room, with no bathing facilities, a hot plate for cooking and clotheslines draped on the walls. "When there is no food on the table at home, what choice do you have?" said Yonel, 37, who arrived legally in Israel last July and sends money home each month to his wife and two young sons.

Some employers take away the workers' passports and, toward the end of one-year or six-month contracts, have them deported without paying their final wages. Confiscating passports is illegal but common, workers and advocates say.

"They are like slaves," said Simcha Yishai, a coordinator with the Workers' Hotline, an advocacy group that tries to help foreign and Palestinian workers.

Some religious and political leaders here warn the influx of foreigners—virtually all of them non-Jewish—threatens the very fabric of the nation.

Soon after the election last May, Netanyahu's government formed several committees to find ways to reduce the number of foreign workers. Ben-Shalom, the Labor Ministry official, said their recommendations are scheduled to be presented to the Cabinet in the next few weeks. They include slashing the number of legal

work permits for foreigners from about 100,000 to 25,000 within four years.

In addition, the government plans to locate and deport as many as possible of the 100,000 illegal workers believed to be in the country, he said.

Other measures include a carrot-and-stick approach of bonuses and fines to persuade employers to hire Palestinians instead of foreigners, and incentives to entice young Israelis to enter unpopular fields such as construction.

The construction industry, which relies heavily on immigrant workers, is expected to employ its considerable political clout to fight the new policies. One reason, according to workers' advocates, is that immigrants are willing to work for as much as 40 percent less than their Arab counterparts.

Hanna Zohar, a founder of the Workers' Hotline, said the foreigners generally receive no overtime, sick leave or paid holidays. But she blames not only the unethical employers and agencies that exploit the workers but also the regulations that create a system rife with the potential for abuse.

For instance, under conditions set by the Interior Ministry, a worker's visa is linked to employment by a specific company or individual. The employer must sign a guarantee and deposit the equivalent of about \$1,500 to ensure that the worker fulfills the terms of the visa. The worker is not allowed to change employers, regardless of conditions. If the worker does, he or she instantly becomes an illegal.

Ben-Shalom said he hopes the one-employer rule will be changed, enabling the workers to leave employers who exploit them.

But that is not the case now. Yonel lives in a former Tel Aviv restaurant now crowded with seven men, four sets of bunk beds, a table and plastic chairs. All said they had no choice but to remain in Israel until their contracts expire; not only have their passports been taken, but the average wage of \$500 a month is five times what they could make at home.

Constantine Forestreanu, 43, a heavily bearded man wearing a T-shirt, sweatpants and slippers, said he was on his second stint in Israel but found it so difficult the first time that he debated for 18 months before returning.

Of 17 friends who arrived with him last October, only two remain, he said. The rest returned to Romania, unable to endure the long hours and difficult conditions.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

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Israeli soldiers with snipers set up blocks between Bethlehem and the road leading to Jabal Abu Ghneim, Tuesday, one day before the start of the excavation works.



Supplément

La Jordanie reine de Paris

Voilà une semaine débutait la saison jordanienne. Une saison prolongée qui s'étalera sur le printemps, l'été et l'automne parisien. Le Jourdain vous propose de découvrir les différentes expositions inaugurées dans le cadre de cette manifestation, les artistes exposés, ainsi que les événements à venir.

Hôtel de Ville

La Jordanie lance une invitation au voyage

Entre le printemps et l'été, Paris vit une saison jordanienne. Une série d'expositions, de l'Hôtel de Ville à l'Institut du monde arabe, présentent le Royaume hachémite, ses arts traditionnels et contemporains.

Un petit brûle-parfum nabatéen en terre cuite. Des pages très rares du Coran. Des gravures, des cartes, des écrits de voyageurs. D'anciennes photographies jaunies de Pétra. Mais aussi des toiles et sculptures d'artistes bien vivants: l'exposition "Voyage en Jordanie" est un voyage dans le temps. Un vaste survol de ce qui s'est créé et fabriqué sur cette terre d'Histoire.

La création contemporaine est certainement la plus déconcertante pour un public non averti. De l'art moderne au Royaume Hachémite? Anachronisme...

La Jordanie, ce sont les

vieilles pierres. Et pourtant, les artistes sont là, et bien là, sous les lambris de l'Hôtel de Ville de Paris. Ils sont 14, peintres ou sculpteurs, représentés par leurs œuvres. Et ils éblouissent d'entrée d'exposition que la Jordanie vit bien en 1997.

La suite de l'exposition rappelle la richesse de l'art antique et des sites archéologiques jordaniens. Les mosaïques de Jérash et de Khirbat Al-Samra cohabitent avec de très rares pages du Coran. Elles témoignent ainsi de l'importance de la chrétienté jordanienne, auprès d'un public qui oublie parfois que c'est ici, entre Méditerranée et désert, que sont nées, et ont prospéré, les religions du Livre.

Les neuf fragments présentés proviennent de la Chapelle d'Elia, Maria et Soreg, de l'église Saint-Jean de Jérash, et de l'église Saint-Jean de Khirbat-al-Samra. Ce dernier représente une ville, et rappelle la lambeuse mosaïque de l'église Saint-Georges de Madaba, plus ancienne carte de la région de l'Histoire.

Certains découvrent ainsi avec surprise que la Jordanie n'est pas que sable, et qu'un urbanisme florissant s'est implanté dans les collines fertiles du centre depuis des millénaires. Quarante-deux petits objets archéologiques sont exposés dans des vitrines, comme autant de jalons, de l'âge de bronze aux mamelouks, en passant par l'âge de fer, les périodes nabatéenne, grecque, romaine ou byzantine. La présence de ces pièces est une figure imposée: impossible de montrer la Jordanie sans évo-

quer la richesse de son archéologie. Mais leur présentation fait l'effet d'un assemblage approximatif. Les érudits devront patienter jusqu'en juin, pour admirer à l'Institut du monde arabe une exposition plus rigoureuse. «La Jordanie, sur les pas des archéologues».

Parures et costumes

L'incroyable collection de madame Widad Kavar est également mise à contribution pour cette exposition. Parmi les quelques 1000 costumes et tapis palestiniens et jordaniens, madame Kavar a choisi une dizaine de robes et vingt tapis.

Chaque parure, chaque costume raconte ainsi un peu de la vie des femmes qui les ont brodés, et de l'histoire jordanienne. Et ces pièces mettent en valeur le grand savoir-faire de l'artisanat du royaume, transmis à travers les générations.

Pour clore ce voyage, Pétra, la cité rose-rouge, joyau de la couronne. Le site nabatéen est évoqué par une série de photos inédites ou peu connues du grand public provenant de collections privées ou de l'Ecole biblique de Jérusalem. Les plus anciennes datent de 1864, 52 ans après la redécouverte de la cité nabatéenne par l'explorateur suisse John Burckhardt, et complètent celles prises en 1906 par deux pères dominicains de l'Ecole biblique de Jérusalem, le père Jaussen et le père Savignac.

Quelques clichés récents, en couleur, ne sont qu'un pâle reflet



L'exposition «Voyage en Jordanie» durera jusqu'à la mi-juin à l'Hôtel de Ville de Paris

de la richesse des tonalités et de la lumière magique de la cité nabatéenne.

Ces photos rappellent d'ailleurs celles qui s'affichent actuellement dans les couloirs

du métro parisien, où Pétra est convoquée pour vanter les mérites touristiques du royaume Hachémite. Comme pour souligner que rien ne vaudra une visite en terre jordanienne, et

que ce "Voyage" parisien n'est qu'une invitation... au voyage.

De Paris, Xavier Meunier

L'agenda de la saison jordanienne

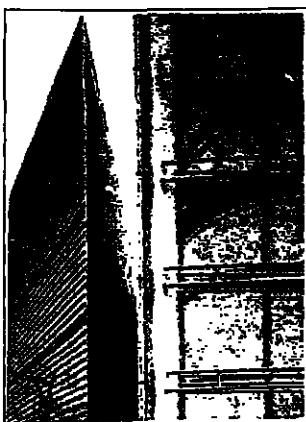
Expositions

Hôtel de Ville de Paris

Jusqu'au 15 juin, quatorze artistes jordaniens sont exposés à la salle Saint-Jean. Une exposition intitulée «Voyage en Jordanie» qui comprend des pièces archéologiques, des costumes traditionnels jordaniens, des tapis et des objets artisanaux.

Le Printemps

Jusqu'au 29 mars, le Printemps exposera sur 400 mètres carrés des objets artisanaux divers tels que des poteries, verres, bijoux, tissus ou autres produits traditionnels jordaniens. Une collection de robes prêtée par Madame Widad Kavar de robes anciennes est également présentée.



L'Institut du monde arabe

De la mi-juin au 5 octobre Invitation dans l'espace et dans le temps, l'exposition «Sur les pas des archéologues» présentera parallèlement les technologies mises en œuvre pour la découverte et la sauvegarde du patrimoine jordanien. En marge de cette exposition, une série de conférences sur l'archéologie sera organisée.

Conférences

Colloque politique

Un colloque organisé par le Centre d'études et de recherche sur le Moyen-Orient contemporain (Cermoc) réunira les 24 et 25 juin à l'Institut du monde arabe des politologues, des économistes et des experts des relations internationales pour débattre de l'histoire politique du royaume hachémite durant ses cinquante années d'indépendance.

Colloque économique

Un colloque économique permettra aux entreprises françaises de découvrir les opportunités offertes par la Jordanie dans le secteur du commerce et des investissements.

Concerts

Trois concerts illustrant la richesse et la diversité des musiques jordaniennes (chants de la région d'Aqaba, musiques du désert et musiques des plaines du Nord) auront lieu les 7, 8 et 9 novembre à la maison des Cultures du monde.

La rédaction du Jourdain remercie particulièrement pour leur aide à la réalisation de ce supplément le Service culturel français de l'Ambassade de France d'Amman, le Centre culturel français et de coopération linguistique d'Amman, Patrice Pain (conception graphique), Nelly Lama, et le Centre de documentation universitaire et scientifique de Damas (fax: 963 11 333 63.06).

Le Jourdain, on y revient.

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Les robes traditionnelles de la collection de Widad Kavar.



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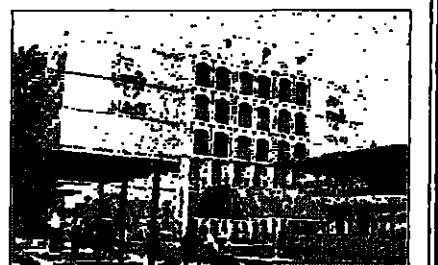
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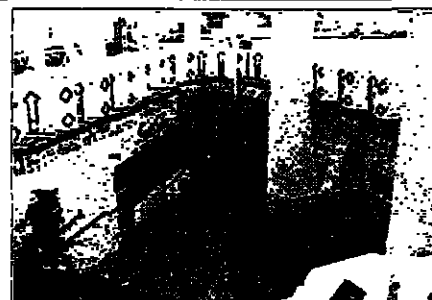
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Portfolio

La reine Nour hôte de Paris

Sa majesté la reine Nour était l'invitée de marque de la France pour l'inauguration de la saison jordanienne. C'est lors d'une rencontre avec Bernadette Chirac qu'était née voilà quelques années l'idée d'une exposition à l'Hôtel de ville. Ce projet a ensuite pris de l'ampleur, et différentes manifestations sont venues le compléter, dont l'exposition à l'Institut du monde arabe prévue en juin.

Reçue par Bernadette Chirac à l'Elysée le 11 mars dernier, Sa majesté la reine Nour recevait auparavant au musée du Louvre le rouleau de cuivre de Qumrân, restauré par EDF dans le cadre d'une convention de mécénat technologique et scientifique avec la Jordanie.

Elle inaugurerait ensuite l'exposition «Voyage en Jordanie» à l'Hôtel de Ville, et le lendemain l'exposition d'artisanat du Printemps. Celle-ci présente sur 400 mètres carrés des objets jordaniens tels que des poteries, des verreries, des tissus, des tapis qui sont vendus au public. Des pièces de la collection de Widad Kavar (robes traditionnelles) figurent aussi dans cette exposition qui durera jusqu'à la fin du mois de mars.



Sa majesté la reine Nour, entre Pierre Rosenberg, président-directeur du Musée du Louvre (à droite) et Elmond Alphandéry, président d'EDF (à gauche).



Sa majesté la reine Nour avec Bernadette Chirac au magasin Printemps.

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L'inauguration de l'exposition de l'Hôtel de Ville par sa majesté la reine Nour et Bernadette Chirac.



Communiqué publicitaire

Jordan Design&Trade Center

L'idée de la saison jordanienne est née voilà trois ans, suite à de nombreuses réunions entre sa majesté la reine Nour et Bernadette Chirac. Son objectif est de permettre aux Parisiens de découvrir la culture et les traditions artisanales de la Jordanie.

Le Jordan Design&Trade Center de la Fondation Nour Hussein a permis l'organisation de l'exposition qui se déroule actuellement au Printemps, en collaboration avec des délégations venant régulièrement de France.

Le Jordan Design & Trade Center a été créé en 1990 dans le but d'améliorer les produits d'artisanat jordanien et afin de présenter la production la plus récente sur les marchés internationaux. Il soutient de nombreux projets à travers la Jordanie, tels que des formations dans le domaine de la vente.

La Jordanie a un riche passé de plusieurs siècles de productions d'objets artisanaux dont la qualité est inimitable: linge de maison brodé, verrerie, céramique, ... Ces produits sont la preuve d'un artisanat recherché, qu'il s'agisse de vêtements, d'objets de décoration ou de cadeaux.

Le Jordan Design&Trade Center est le lien vital entre la production locale et les marchés mondiaux. En créant de nouveaux débouchés en Europe, Amérique du Nord, Asie, il travaille avec un grand nombre de producteurs locaux en leur servant d'agent auprès des acheteurs. Il se charge d'améliorer certains produits (design), recherche les styles les plus vendeurs en Europe, effectue des contrôles de qualité.

L'artisanat présenté à Paris au magasin Printemps provient de programmes initiés par des Organisations non gouvernementales comme Jordan River&Trade Center, Bani Hamida, Jordan River Design, Queen Alia Fund, et Wadi Dana, qui offrent à la fois des formations et des emplois à des artisans, essentiellement des femmes. Ces projets ont permis à un grand nombre de femmes, habitant majoritairement dans des régions rurales, d'améliorer leur statut économique et social et la qualité de vie de leurs familles.

Dans ses
généralistes
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Galerie de portraits

Fahrelnissa Zeid

Nawal Abdullah

Dans ses portraits gigantesques et stylisés, Fahrelnissa Zeid (1901-1991) se révèle l'héritière des peintres byzantins, et dans ses scènes d'intérieur, des peintres persans.

Originaire de l'île des Princes, Istanbul, elle a en elle l'esprit de l'Orient. Son père, Shakir Pasha, était diplomate et historien de l'empire Ottoman. Elle fait ses études à l'Académie des Beaux Arts d'Istanbul, et commence sa carrière avec des œuvres classiques en aquarelle, des scènes de sa vie sur le Bosphore qui montrent une sensibilité et une force innées.

Elle n'ignorait rien de l'Occident, car cette artiste avait fait partie de la scène parisienne et de l'Ecole de Paris. En 1927, elle étudie à Paris à l'Académie Ranson. Elève de Roger Bissière qui encourageait ses élèves à créer un style fluide et abstrait dérivant de la nature, elle quitte le monde de la figuration.

Fahrelnissa succombe à l'influence du primitivisme: elle utilise des couleurs vives, exotiques, des lignes rugueu-



Fahrelnissa Zeid dans son atelier

ses, des stylisations de têtes, et des mosaïques de rythmes. Au Salon des Réalités Nouvelles qui exige que toutes les œuvres

exposées soient abstraites, elle expose en 1953 auprès de géants comme Degottex, Duvivier, Marcelle Loubchansky, Jean Messagier ou Alfonso Ossorio.

Les lignes de Fahrelnissa flottent dans l'espace, créant un tumulte d'arabesques et une fluidité spontanée qui étaient sa seule façon d'exprimer toutes les sensations qu'elle ressentait devant le monde de l'éphémère. Avec des titres comme *Voyages étranges* ou *Images d'ailleurs*, elle exprime l'esprit de l'au-delà. Elle partage le même credo que ses amis de l'époque, les artistes français Serge Poliakoff et James Pichette: la peinture peut suggérer la réalité physique, sa texture et sa couleur pouvant remplacer de vrais objets et devenir sujets des tableaux.

Fahrelnissa épouse le Prince Zeid, oncle du roi Hussein de Jordanie, et voyage en Europe comme femme d'ambassadeur. «Le temps grisâtre de Londres ne me dérange pas. Je reste une bonne orientale, portant le soleil dans mon cœur!» déclarait Fahrelnissa.

Elle propose en 1964 au musée Hittite d'Ankara une exposition sur le thème des derviches, leur soufisme et leurs liturgies dansantes. La répétition des formes des derviches rappelle la répétition des liturgies soufistes. L'intensité des couleurs, seules comme dans un vitrail, renforce l'impression mystique et spirituelle.

En 1968, quand

l'astronome s'envole, dans l'espace, Fahrelnissa Zeid découvre le vaste cosmos et crée des œuvres gigantesques en noir et blanc (*L'effacement de la lune et de l'astronome*) ou en couleurs à partir de petits dessins, allant ainsi de l'infiniment petit à l'infiniment grand.

Elle entre ensuite dans une troisième phase de sa recherche artistique avec ses «Paléocris-tallos», des cubes de résine transparents, lumineux, incrustés d'objets tels que des os de poulets opaques qui produisent un effet de contre-jour, accentuant la forme et le patron de ces structures. Fahrelnissa se vantait qu'un de ses Paléocris-tallos se trouvait sur la table d'André Malraux.

Fahrelnissa retourne dans le monde arabe au début des années 80 et crée son insalut à Amman afin de partager cet art auquel elle a consacré sa vie entière. A son tour, elle mène ses élèves vers l'abstraction.

Son dernier tableau n'est qu'une prémonition de sa propre mort. Un œuvre où figurent son mari et ses sœurs décédées. Les parties colorées ne sont plus entourées par des lignes: elles flottent dans l'éther infini!

Fahrelnissa Zeid était une femme qui aimait la beauté, qui était intime avec la couleur, qui manipulait la ligne comme un cavalier manipule son épée. Pour ses élèves, c'était un maître, une mère qui est partie trop tôt! Pour la Jordanie, c'est un trésor que le peuple chérit pour toujours.

Nelly Lama

Depuis les premiers moments de son existence, Nawal Abdullah vit avec l'art. Aussi loin qu'elle se souvienne, l'art a toujours occupé ses pensées. «Toute ma vie, j'ai senti que j'étais née pour peindre... C'est pour cela que j'ai commencé ma carrière artistique. Au début, j'ai suivi le chemin de la peinture traditionnelle, pour ensuite, en 1974, intégrer l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Florence, jusqu'en 1978. Ce que je conserve de cette période, c'est le temps que j'ai passé à observer, regarder en détail toutes les choses qui étaient à ma portée, pour découvrir l'art en général. Ainsi, les portraits que j'ai réalisés à une certaine époque étaient influencés par Michelangelo».

Elle reconnaît avoir eu la chance de vivre sa passion. «Savoir peindre est une chose. Pouvoir mettre en pratique ce savoir en est une autre. J'ai eu la chance de disposer des moyens économiques nécessaires pour étudier et suivre ma carrière». Des contraintes maté-

rielles qui, selon elle, expliquent «un certain tassement de la production des peintres dans la région».

Installée professionnellement sur sa terre natale, Nawal renforce à travers ses toiles les liens amoureux qui la lient à son pays et à sa famille. Sa peinture présente une combinaison harmonieuse de couleurs, donnant un rythme naturel à sa peinture, exprimant son être spontané, ouvert et libre. Les couleurs employées, la force des tons, correspondent aux différentes périodes de la vie de l'artiste.

Concernant la notion d'espace, Nawal Abdullah, suit une évolution qui a commencé avec de petits tableaux. «Je me sentais plus à l'aise sur des toiles de petite taille». Ensuite, avec le temps, son pinceau a pris plus de liberté.



Mariel Dedenis

Ghada Dahdaleh

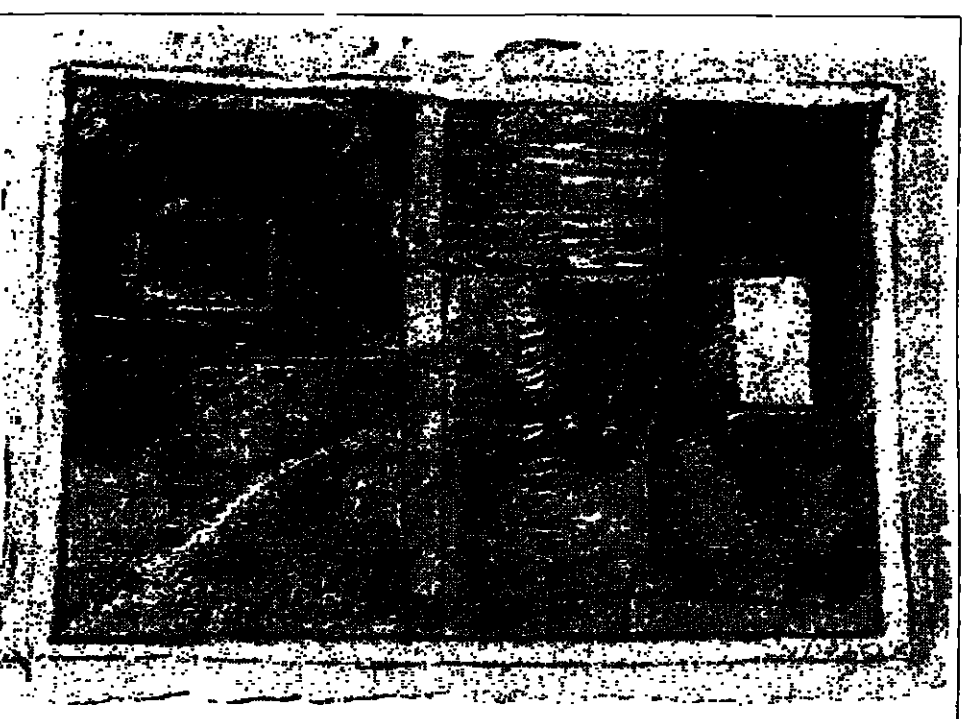
Jeune peintre jordanienne, épouse et mère de famille, Ghada Dahdaleh passe son temps à improviser des formes simples sur papier, les recouvrir de couleurs aux tonalités diverses et y ajouter quelques rythmes chatoyants pour finalement créer un équilibre de maître.

Cette jeune artiste s'appuie sur une grande variété de surfaces: quelques unes rugueuses, rustiques et informelles ou lisses et solides, ou même transparentes et éphémères. Les lignes encadrant les formes ne sont presque jamais raides afin d'offrir une grande liberté.

La surface de la toile ne représente plus une trame uniforme mais elle est parcourue de griffures et de rides. Ce sont leurs surfaces rugueuses, décapées, aux bords déchirés, qui ajoutent à la symbolique du sujet qui est à la source des œuvres de Ghada Dahdaleh, les camps palestiniens.

C'est à partir de ces maisons des camps que Ghada tire ses formes. Elle s'y est souvent trouvée en 1989 lorsqu'elle avait l'habitude d'aller rencontrer les femmes des camps. Elle a été fascinée par les fenêtres et les portes qui constituent aujourd'hui le thème de la troisième phase de production de ses œuvres.

Elle commence par construire ses toiles avec des portes, des fenêtres et des décors géométriques peints sur les murs de ces maisons. Elle utilise aussi le motif du linge pen-



du sur un fil qui passe devant une fenêtre, une scène assez commune dans les quartiers surpeuplés.

Ghada Dahdaleh commence par ces images, puis se détache lentement de leur représentation pour créer un monde ab-

strait qui lui appartient. Elle utilise les fenêtres des maisons comme les pages d'un livre, répétant les mêmes rythmes dans chaque rectangle pour les lier.

Nelly Lama

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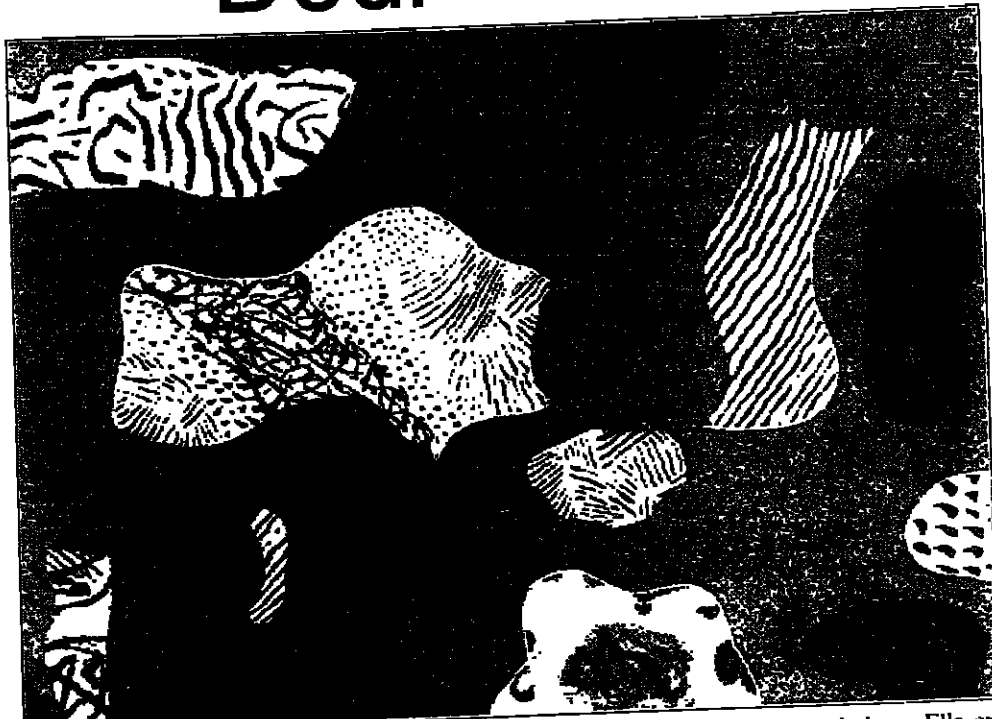
Dodi

Dodi Tabbaa se situe au carrefour de nombreuses influences et de nombreux styles. Née au Pakistan, elle a exploré le milieu des médias avant de connaître une renommée artistique.

Elle est à la fois adepte de peinture, de gravure, de décoration, avec le textile et le papier, et son art est en constante évolution.

Ses œuvres sont à la fois exubérantes, énergiques, chaotiques et inventives. Des adjectifs qui traduisent sa recherche constante de nouvelles voies, de nouvelles formes. «Je trouve que mon art devient au fil des ans de plus en plus complexe», explique Dodi Tabbaa. «Je puise mon inspiration dans le bonheur visuel qu'est pour moi la vie quotidienne».

Son imagination est constamment stimulée, sans qu'elle s'en rende parfaitement compte, par son environnement quotidien. Elle l'est également par l'art du passé: depuis l'art primitif d'Afrique et les miniatures orientales jusqu'à l'art contemporain de Pollock, Miro, Hartung ou Yves Klein. On peut noter une certaine évolution dans ce flot de création continu. Par opposition à



ses œuvres les plus anciennes, caractérisées par la profusion de couleurs et l'exubérance des formes kaléidoscopiques, ses dernières expositions ont témoigné d'une tendance plus contemplative, un style plus re-

tenu dans le domaine de la gravure. Mais là encore, elle sait être originale: ses gravures sont tirées à très peu d'exemplaires, puis retravaillées à la main par l'artiste, de manière à produire des variations colorées sur une

même forme de base. Elle explore également les possibilités de la substance et de la forme dans ses «puzzles» qui allient la légèreté de la peinture à l'épaisseur du carton découpé. ■

Mona Qaddoumi

Ali Jabri

Influencé par la civilisation islamique, c'est en 1977, au Caire, qu'Ali Jabri entame sa carrière artistique, avant de se rendre à Amman au Musée des Traditions Populaires en tant que conservateur et directeur artistique.

Emmerveillé par la pureté des localités lointaines de son pays, il a fait de longs séjours sur les territoires des tribus nomades, et participe aux fouilles archéologiques de l'Institut français du Proche-Orient, de l'Université de Sydney ou encore du British Institute.

Deux séjours seront déterminants dans son approche artistique: en France en 1982 et aux États-Unis en 1986. Très sensible à l'héritage du passé jordanien autant qu'à son expression contemporaine, Ali Jabri fut chargé, entre 1985 et 1993, de divers projets d'architecture et d'aménagement de sites pour le ministère du Tourisme et des Antiquités.

Il poursuit aujourd'hui encore

l'effort de sauvegarde et de mise en valeur du patrimoine traditionnel urbain comme rural dans le royaume hachémite.

Son œuvre, figurative, fondée sur le réalisme du dessin, est le résultat d'une profonde observation des lieux et des emblèmes du monde arabe et classique.

Ainsi, le travail d'Ali Jabri exprime la fragmentation culturelle de son pays à travers des toiles plus dures et urbanistes, imprégnées d'une atmosphère de perte, d'interruption, de dissonances.

La dichotomie persiste entre la beauté ancienne et les débris du présent. L'expression de cette césure est manifeste dans ses sources d'inspiration hétéroclites: l'Antiquité, la Chine, l'Égypte, l'Empire ottoman, la renaissance, Palladio, Picasso, Mies Van der Rohe, le design contemporain, l'art et l'architecture de l'Islam. ■

Le Jourdain

Ammar Khammash

La solitude et la nature sont deux mots magiques pour l'architecte et artiste jordanien Ammar Khammash. «Quand je suis seul dans la nature, loin des constructions urbaines, j'ai l'impression de me sentir vraiment chez moi», explique Ammar Khammash. «Cela me permet de mieux fonctionner».

Dans son travail, l'environnement dans lequel il se trouve joue un rôle très important. Il est constamment en train d'étudier, de se documenter, d'essayer de comprendre. Une recherche dont il se sert par la suite dans ses œuvres, afin de guider le public dans son propre environnement.

Né en 1960 à Amman, il a obtenu sa maîtrise d'architecture aux États-Unis et a effectué deux ans d'études en ethnologie à l'université du Yarmouk en Jordanie.

L'architecte Ammar Khammash a initié une nouvelle tendance en Jordanie concernant le concept du dessin, de construction et de rénovation. Une philosophie que l'on retrouve dans ses réalisations (auberges

d'Um Qais ou Pella, centre d'art de Darat al-Funun) dans lesquelles il a essayé de recréer le passé pour l'intégrer à l'environnement actuel.

«Tout ce que je réalise aujourd'hui, j'ai l'impression de l'avoir déjà fait», explique Ammar Khammash. Les rêves d'enfants d'Ammar Khammash ne semblent pas être très éloignés de ceux qu'il continue de faire.

A côté de son travail d'architecte et d'artiste, Ammar Khammash fait beaucoup de photographie sur des sujets tels que l'architecture traditionnelle, l'anthropologie, ou l'archéologie.

Il a notamment publié deux



ouvrages consacrés à l'architecture des villages jordaniens et la cité de Pétra. «Sans limites» peut en fait être une bonne définition pour cet artiste qui ne cesse d'entreprendre de

nouveaux projets visant à préserver le patrimoine architectural et culturel du royaume hachémite. ■

Samia Abou-Samir

Khalid Kreis

Figure marquante dans le paysage de l'art plastique jordanien, Khalid Kreis est un peintre en pleine maturité artistique. Professeur de dessin et de peinture à la faculté d'architecture et des Beaux-Arts de l'Université jordanienne pour les femmes, il est le président de l'association des arts plastiques jordaniens.

Né à Kérak en 1955, il commence ses études d'art à l'Université Hitwan du Caire, et les poursuit en Espagne, Italie et Mexique, durant dix années (1973-1983). «J'ai voulu goûter à tout et j'ai étudié également le dessin, la peinture, la sculpture, la peinture murale, l'art graphique et la lithographie».

Artiste complet par sa formation, Khalid Kreis a dû faire son choix, en préférant la peinture à la sculpture. «Il m'a été douloureux de renoncer à l'une des deux. Dans ma tête je fais encore de la sculpture, mais je la matérialise rarement», confesse-t-il.

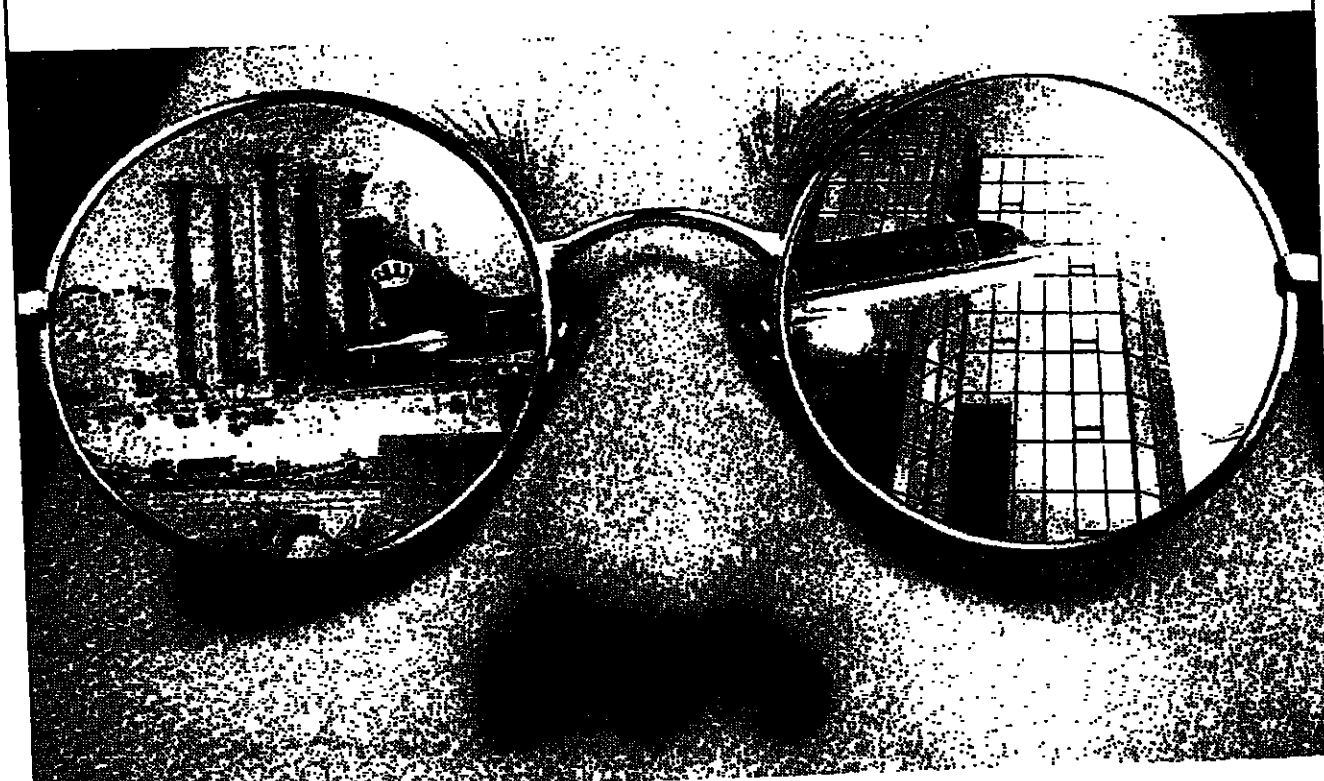
En tant que peintre, Khalid Kreis reconnaît l'influence de Paul Klee et de Tàpies dans son approche de «l'inconnu». «Même si j'ai une silhouette ou un visage, ce n'est jamais la représentation que je cherche, mais l'expression d'un monde intérieur», précise-t-il.

En qualité de président de l'Association des arts plastiques jordaniens, Khalid Kreis note l'accélération du rythme des activités et des expositions dans le royaume hachémite. «C'est seulement à partir des années 80-90 qu'on peut parler d'un mouvement d'art plastique jordanien d'un vrai public», explique-t-il.

«En comparaison avec l'Égypte, l'Irak ou la Syrie, c'est une mouvance jeune, en l'absence d'une Académie des Beaux-Arts en Jordanie retarde son développement». ■

Anca de Mado

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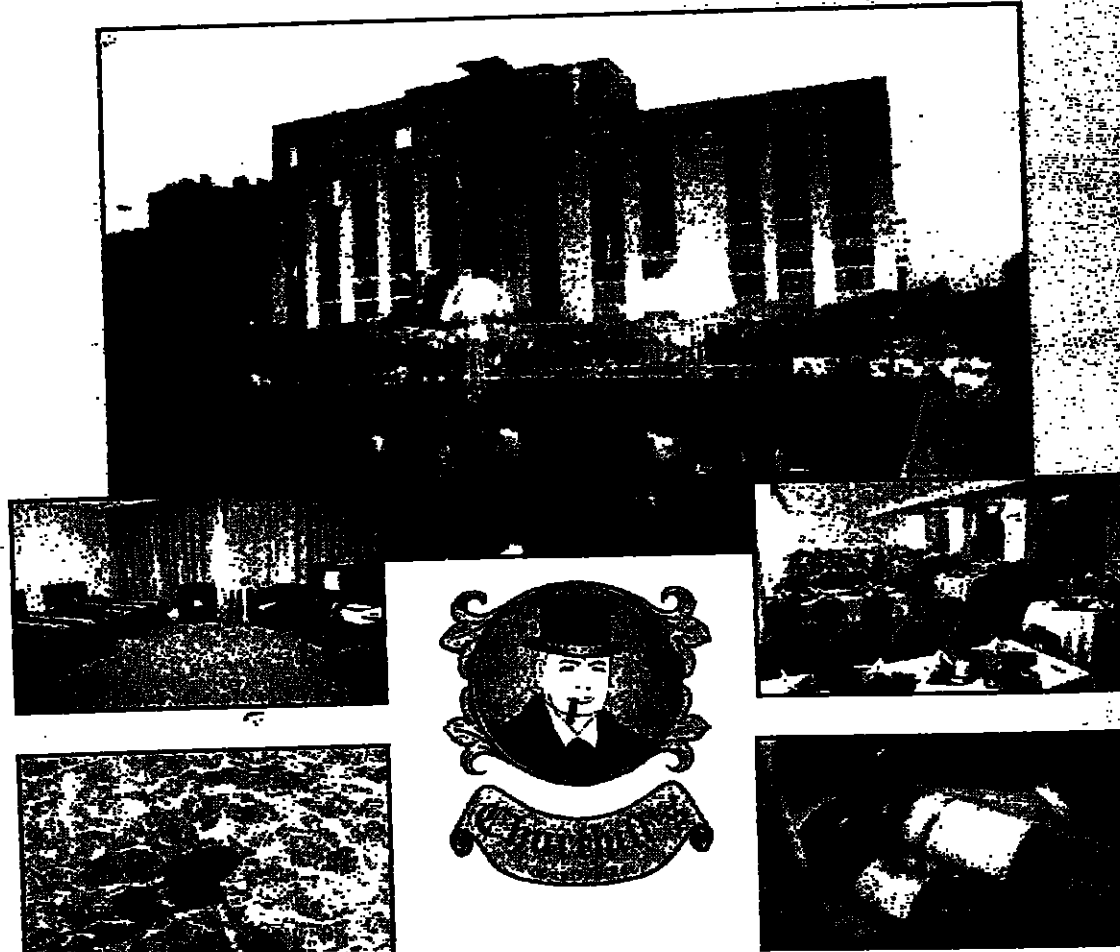
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Hind Nasser

Peintre consacrée et remarquable militante de la culture, Sherifa Hind Nasser représente un véritable élément moteur dans plusieurs secteurs de la vie culturelle jordanienne. Présidente du Conservatoire National de Musique de la Fondation Nour Al Hussein depuis 1985, auteur du premier projet de développement et de marketing de l'artisanat traditionnel jordanien et à la tête du comité chargé d'étudier la création d'un Musée National à Amman d'ici l'an 2000, Sherifa Hind Nasser réfléchit déjà à d'autres projets comme la fondation d'une Académie des Beaux-Arts et d'un Centre de la Science à Amman.

Diplômée de l'Université américaine de Beyrouth en sciences politiques, Sherifa Hind Nasser a ensuite la révélation de l'importance de la culture comme facteur de progrès au sein de la société.

Elle comprend que sa contribution au développement de la société jordanienne devra se faire en agissant dans ce domaine plutôt que dans la poli-

tique. Cette réorientation est renforcée par la découverte de sa vocation artistique.

Elle étudie l'art avec la Princesse Fahrelnissa Zeid, et de 1976 à 1981, se consacre à ses études d'une manière systématique, en groupe avec huit autres femmes artistes, dans le sillage de l'illustre princesse membre de «l'école de Paris» des années cinquante. L'amitié et la complicité artistique avec Rula Shukairy, Suha Shoman et Euphemia Risk ont survécu à la dissolution du groupe.

La peinture pour Sherifa Hind Nasser est une question de volonté. «Je dois juste trouver le temps de me retrouver devant la toile et de me mettre à travailler», explique-t-elle. «J'ai beaucoup d'idées à exploiter et à développer en langage plastique, car je trouve partout des sources d'inspiration, dans la nature et l'histoire de ce pays ainsi que dans mes voyages», rajoute-t-elle.

Anca de Maio



Mona Saoudi

Artiste jordanienne probablement la plus connue du public français, notamment grâce à l'une de ses sculptures monumentales exposée sur le parvis de l'Institut du monde arabe. Mona Saoudi a regagné depuis peu le Liban. Diplômée de l'Ecole des Beaux arts de Paris, c'est en effet au pays du Cédre qu'elle a vécu entre 1969 et 1983 avant de retrouver son pays natal, la Jordanie.

Mona Saoudi vit une véritable histoire d'amour avec la pierre. Elle commence par la choisir minutieusement, étudiant ses couleurs, sa texture, sa forme et sa solidité. Elle laisse les traces de son marteau sur l'une, en polit une autre pour en accentuer les veines naturelles.

La forme est toujours monolithique, peu éloignée des courbes et des aspérités originales de la pierre. Dans les rythmes qu'elle crée, il y a toujours une force abondante ou une sensualité assez prononcée. Elle arrive à faire passer une vitalité dynamique qui traduit sa propre personnalité.

Bien qu'éclectique, son œuvre est l'expression d'une pensée toujours constante. La pierre est divisée en morceaux qui se répètent, s'élargissent ou se métamorphosent, et qui bougent autour d'un point de gravité, presque toujours en forme de trou ou d'arc. Ne se contentant pas de ce rythme, elle en introduit un autre, plus superficiel, et crée un dialogue entre les deux. C'est avec ce dialogue de courbes et de lignes droites que les monolithes de pierre perdent leur poids.

Mona Saoudi est maître de la pierre et pourtant, devant une belle pièce, elle subit comme une esclave, dévouée à sa sensualité.

Nelly Lama



Ahmad Nawash



Ce peintre jordanien d'origine palestinienne, né en 1934 à Ein-Karem, réside actuellement en Jordanie. Il a étudié les Beaux-Arts en France et en Italie. Ses tableaux ont franchi les frontières du royaume et plusieurs de ses œuvres sont exposées en permanence à l'Institut du monde arabe de Paris, ainsi que dans des galeries en Tunisie ou bien au Pakistan.

«Mon inspiration est l'humanité et son devenir, la tragédie du monde arabe et tout particulièrement la tragédie vécue par le peuple palestinien», explique Ahmad Nawash.

«Le peintre qui ne représente pas les souffrances de son peuple dans sa peinture n'est pas un vrai peintre car sa peinture

perd son âme et son sens».

«Je m'inspire de ce qui me choque au quotidien, et les événements ne manquent pas: la guerre, l'injustice, les familles chassées de leurs foyers, l'hypercorruption...», ajoute Ahmad Nawash.

Au premier coup d'œil, certaines de ses toiles peuvent paraître naïves. Ahmad Nawash possède un style unique: il représente des silhouettes humaines aux proportions déformées baignant dans des coloris simples. Mais la simplicité de sa technique n'est qu'apparente. C'est au contraire la peinture d'un esprit tourmenté et complexe. Les surfaces de ses toiles sont très travaillées, et les couleurs employées sont faites à partir de nombreuses couleurs.

Ahmad Nawash ne se contente en effet pas des coloris tels qu'ils sortent des tubes.

«Quand je prends mon pinceau, c'est à chaque fois comme si je peignais pour la première fois», avoue Ahmad Nawash. «J'oublie les autres tableaux et je laisse libre cours à mes envies. Toutes mes œuvres sont différentes. A chaque fois, il y a de nouvelles idées et une nouvelle sensation à travers les couleurs».

Mona Qaddoumi

Suha Shoman



La renommée artistique de Suha Shoman tient en Jordanie bien sûr à ses œuvres, mais aussi à son action pour la promotion des arts dans ce pays, avec notamment la création du centre Dar al Funun.

Titulaire d'un diplôme de droit, Suha Shoman a préféré choisir une voie artistique. Elle a suivi des cours artistiques à l'Institut Fahrelnissa Zeid d'Amman. Là-bas, elle s'est inspirée du style artistique de cette éminente école. Mais ses talents créatifs lui ont permis de créer un style unique qui lui appartient.

Ses tableaux n'incorporent que des symboles. Des symboles pris dans la nature, des matériaux bruts. Les roches peintes, le sable collé traduisent l'identité arabo-jordanienne de Suha Shoman.

Avec les couleurs et leurs secrets, Suha parle, exprime et crée. Claires ou foncées, denses ou légères, lumineuses ou sombres, ce ne sont que des couleurs qui abordent des thèmes

vivants. Des thèmes incarnant la mémoire vivante du passé et l'espérance du futur.

Au fil des années, Suha Shoman a présenté ses œuvres au public local et international, au cours d'expositions personnelles et collectives. Elle connaît bien Paris, pour y avoir été

exposée déjà deux fois, en 1984 et 1995. Ces dernières années, elle s'est consacrée à un triptyque artistique, avec trois expositions: Pétra I, II et III. La cité de Pétra est devenue légendaire grâce à sa beauté esthétique, mais aussi grâce à la beauté des textes et des œuvres

qu'elle a inspirés. Cette force intellectuelle et créative présente dans ses roches se retrouve dans les toiles de Suha Shoman pour qui la roche et le sable sont un éternel recommencement des choses.

Oronuh el Abed

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Rula Shukairy



Les toiles de Rula Shukairy sont comme des paysages de rêve nés de l'imaginaire mais entretenant tout de même des rapports secrets avec le monde naturel. «C'est à travers ma peinture que je m'exprime le mieux», explique Rula Shukairy, préférant ne pas commenter ses œuvres.

Cette peintre jordanienne est diplômée de l'Institut des Beaux-Arts Fahrelnissa Zeid d'Amman. Elle a participé à de nombreuses expositions en Jordanie. Ses tableaux ont déjà franchi les frontières, et plusieurs de ses toiles sont exposées en permanence au centre d'art de Darat el Funun, un des plus importants d'Amman.

Elle conçoit sa peinture à la fois comme une expression totalement libre de sa propre personnalité et comme un outil de connaissance. Les formes qui en naissent, évoquant tantôt la dureté de la pierre, tantôt (lorsqu'elle utilise l'encre de Chine) l'aspect vaporeux des nuages, nous renvoient à la structure même de la matière, comme peut le faire la physique contemporaine, par d'autres moyens.

Pour autant, la peinture de Rula Shukairy n'est pas une peinture de détails. Elle ne cherche pas à grossir démesurément les éléments quotidiens de

notre existence, contrairement à la peinture hyper-réaliste, mais à suggérer l'infini qui se glisse entre les signes de notre monde. Les paysages intérieurs

qu'elle offre aux regards ne sont pas sans liens avec la peinture surréaliste car, même si la technique est différente, on retrouve chez elle une même con-

ception de l'art comme un voyage onirique, les yeux fermés. ■

Mona Qaddoumi

Wijdan



Peu d'artistes ont un curriculum vitae aussi riche que son Altesse royale la princesse Wijdan: première femme à représenter la Jordanie à l'Assemblée générale de l'Organisation des Nations Unies, en 1962, la Princesse Wijdan est titulaire d'un diplôme supérieur en art islamique de l'Université de Londres. Elle est auteur de nombreux ouvrages dont «L'art moderne en Jordanie» et «Qu'est-ce que l'Art islamique?».

C'est elle qui a fondé la société royale des Beaux Arts ainsi que la Galerie nationale des Beaux Arts à Amman, dont elle est aujourd'hui le conservateur. Elle est également professeur, enseignant l'Histoire de l'Art islamique à l'Université d'Al Bayt, à Mafrâq, dans le Nord du royaume hachémite, et à l'Institut de diplomatie d'Amman.

C'est en 1958 qu'elle s'initie à la peinture, en fréquentant les ateliers des peintres Armando Bruno et Muhanna Durra installés à Amman.

«Au départ, c'était un hobby. Puis la peinture est devenue une part importante de ma vie», confie la princesse Wijdan. Ses derniers tableaux sont tous construits autour de

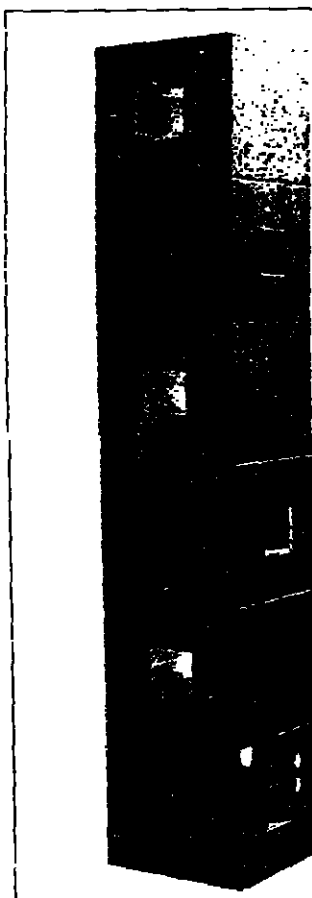
la calligraphie arabe. «J'utilise la calligraphie pour la composition du tableau mais aussi pour sa signification. Par exemple, après la guerre du Golfe, j'ai peint une série intitulée Kerbala.

C'est une référence à la ville où le petit fils du prophète Mohammed, Hussein, a été assassiné. A cette époque, j'avais le sentiment que les images n'étaient pas assez fortes pour exprimer mes sen-

timents et j'ai éprouvé le besoin d'intégrer des mots calligraphiés dans mes tableaux. ■

Claudine Assad

Samer Tabbaa



La pierre contient la sagesse infinie de plusieurs millions d'années. Elle est là, attendant d'être explorée», explique le sculpteur jordanien Samer Tabbaa. Dans son travail, c'est la résistance et la personnalité de la pierre qui l'impressionnent.

Né à Taëf, en Arabie Saoudite, Samer Tabbaa étudie la sociologie, l'anthropologie et puis l'art. Il obtient sa maîtrise à l'université de Kent State. En 1981, il quitte son poste de directeur de la Galerie Nationale des Beaux Arts d'Amman pour effectuer un séjour en Espagne.

Il commence à tailler le granit, le grès, et diverses pierres qu'il trouve en Espagne. Au début, il touchait à peine à la pierre, préservant son identité intrinsèque.

Son œuvre a ensuite évolué. Il a créé des monolithes divisés en plusieurs sections. Des tranches qui permettent de se rendre compte de la maîtrise de l'homme sur la pierre, certaines parties portant elles le caractère résistant, ou au contraire, cassant de la pierre. Un rythme qui retrace l'histoire du combat de l'homme avec la nature.

Avec le bronze, qu'il utilise rarement, il produit des jeux de lumière sur des surfaces polies et luisantes, mates ou patinées. Il crée des structures en bois à la surface peinte en noir et blanc sur lesquelles sont juxtaposées des lignes ondulées.

Dernièrement, c'est le bleu électrique qui l'a tenté. Samer Tabbaa réalise des moulages à partir de pièces de machines, produisant des reliefs qu'il recouvre entièrement de bleu.

Quant à ses dessins, il nous offre des œuvres minimalistes au crayon, recouvrant tout l'espace avec des effets rugueux mais subtils. Un peu à l'image de cet artiste, à la fois si introverti et si fort! ■

Nelly Lama

«C'est dans le travail manuel de la femme jordanienne que l'on retrouve l'identité originelle de la Jordanie. Sauvegarder cet héritage permet de concilier la modernité avec la tradition». Avec ces quelques mots, Widad Kawar explique les raisons qui la poussent depuis 30 ans à se préoccuper de la conservation de l'art féminin en Jordanie.

«Devant certains événements qui auraient pu mettre en danger notre héritage, je me suis sentie beaucoup plus responsabilisée pour sauver une partie de notre passé. Cette prise de conscience est intervenue avec

les conflits israélo-arabes, l'industrialisation et la modernisation des procédés de fabrication. Le marché jordanien a lui aussi été bouleversé avec l'apparition des tissus synthétiques. Cela a notamment altéré le rôle de la femme».

A présent, le recours aux techniques traditionnelles se fait à travers certaines fondations, telles que celle de la reine Naour, et grâce à de nombreuses femmes qui sont attachées aux traditions de leur pays. «Si l'on compare la situation à celle qui prévalait voilà 30 ans, l'art féminin est aujourd'hui mieux défendu.



Tout nouveau costume du tapis ainsi fabriqué enrichit notre héritage et le sauve de l'oubli.

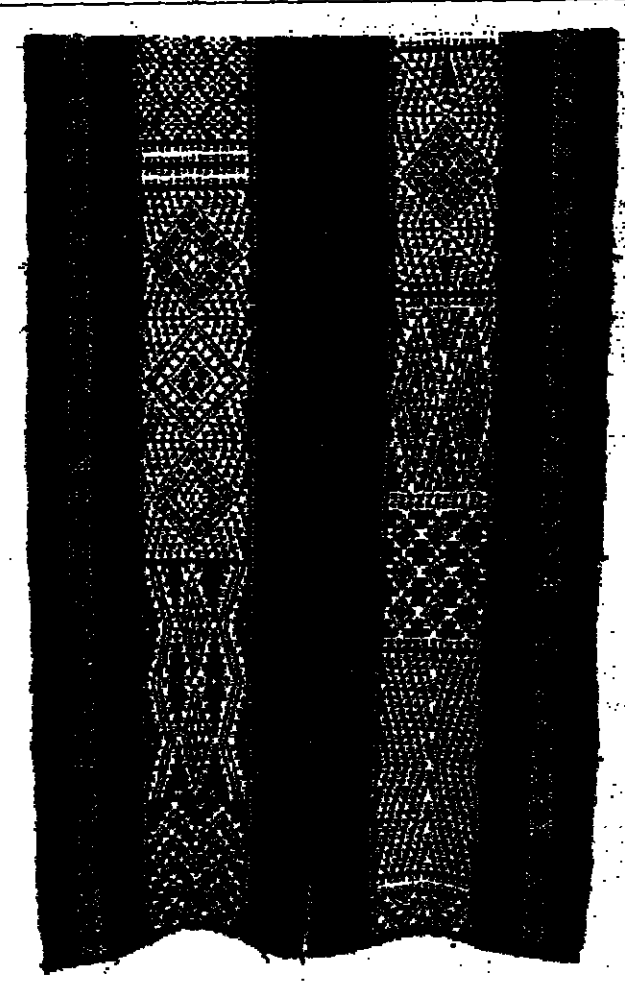
Au cours des dernières décennies, elle a rassemblé plus de 10.000 pièces qu'elle expose un peu partout dans le monde pour présenter la culture jordanienne.

Dans le cadre de la saison jordanienne, des pièces rares sont présentées à l'exposition de l'Hôtel de Ville et au magasin Printemps. Une partie de sa fascinante collection comptant dix costumes traditionnels rares, des parures, des céramiques, ainsi qu'une vingtaine de tapis anciens, palestiniens et jordaniens, permettra aux visiteurs de parcourir quelques pages de l'histoire jordanienne.

Comme tous les participants jordaniens, elle souhaite réussir à présenter clairement l'histoire et la culture de ce pays oriental. «Notre manifestation est accueillie dans la capitale culturelle du monde. C'est une grande opportunité pour offrir un avant-goût de la diversité culturelle de la Jordanie et inviter à sa découverte. ■

Nahed al Khloof

Widad Kawar



C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

Cinéma

Cycle «Les enfants au cinéma». Le 24 mars à 20h30 au CCCL, La gloire de mon père de Yves Robert (1990).

Exposition

Muhammed Ali Shakir, jusqu'au 31 mars au CCCL.

Théâtre

Les 28 et 29 mars, la Compagnie de l'Energumène se produira à 20h00 au Centre culturel royal dans le cadre du Festival international de théâtre d'Amman.

Le 31 mars, la compagnie du P'tit matin proposera à 19h00 un spectacle Cabaret au Centre culturel royal.

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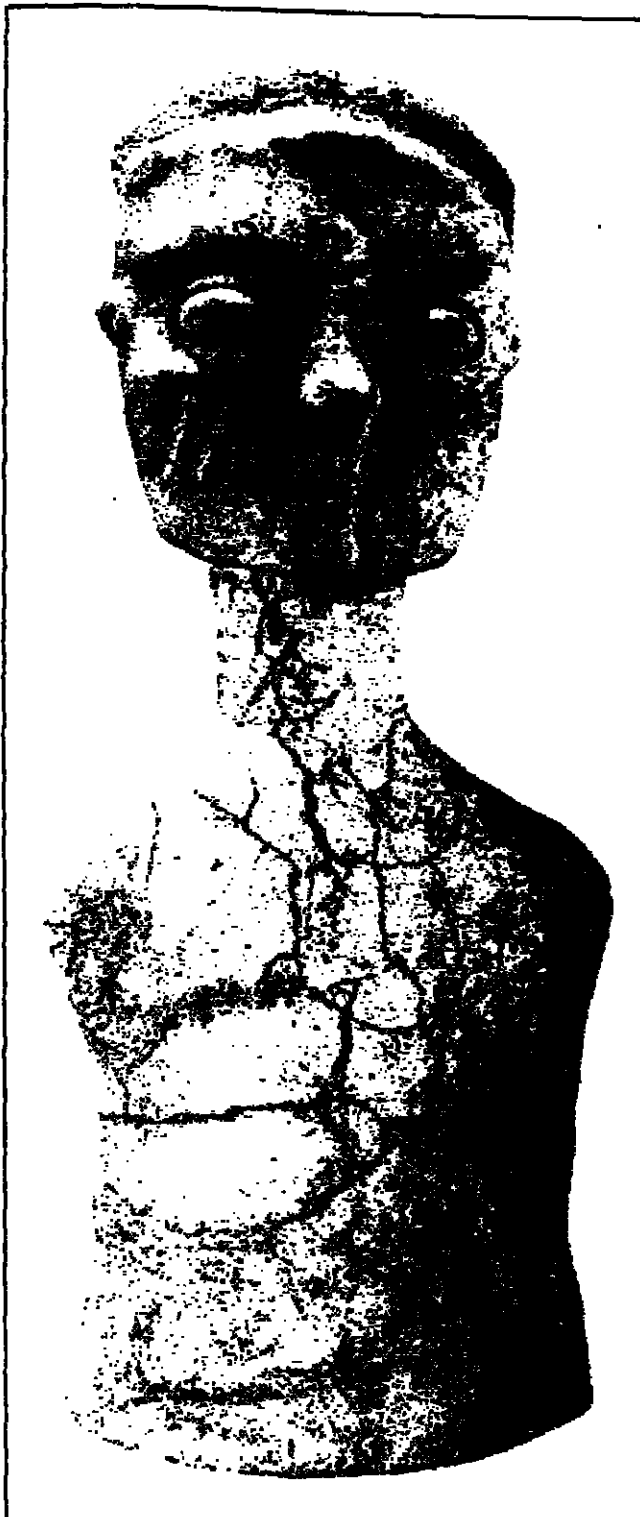
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Sur les pas des archéologues

Archéologie

Le mystère des statues d'Aïn Ghazal

A l'occasion de l'exposition de l'Institut du monde arabe qui ouvrira ses portes à la mi-juin, cinq statues d'Aïn Ghazal seront présentées pour la première fois en Europe. Les docteurs Gary Rolevson et Zeidan Kafafi, superviseurs des travaux de fouilles d'Aïn Ghazal, retracent l'histoire de ces statues et analysent leur signification.



Le site d'Aïn Ghazal compte environ 30 statues de ce type.

Le site néolithique de Ain Ghazal (environ 7250-4500 avant J.C) forme la partie située au Nord-Est de la ville d'Amman, capitale du royaume hashémite. C'est l'un des plus grands villages agricoles anciens dans la région du Proche-Orient du point de vue superficiel. Ce site confère à la capitale jordanienne des racines supplémentaires au niveau de sa civilisation. En effet, elle fut connue comme la capitale de Ammonites durant la première moitié du premier millénaire avant notre ère (la déesse Ammon) et aussi comme une ville romaine (Philadelphia) durant le règne romain sur les pays du Levant. Les vestiges des sanctuaires et des amphithéâtres qui se répandaient çà et là, et auxquels le touriste peut facilement avoir accès, offrent le meilleur témoignage de l'ampleur de cette civilisation. Cependant, durant la domination ottomane, Amman n'était pas plus qu'un petit village dont les maisons s'éparpillaient sur les deux rives du lit du Wadi Zarka. Après avoir été proclamée capitale de la Jordanie, la ville d'Amman a connu une rapide évolution et un développement considérable, en raison de multiples facteurs, dont le plus important est le progrès de civilisation que connaît actuellement la Jordanie sous le règne de la famille hashémite.

Ce site fut découvert par hasard alors que les pelletiers travaillaient au tracement de la route principale Amman-Zarka en 1974. Toutefois, les fouilles n'ont débuté qu'en 1982, lors-

qu'une mission archéologique commune de la Direction générale jordanienne des Antiquités et du centre américain des recherches orientales à Amman ont procédé à des fouilles expérimentales sur ce site. Par la suite, l'Université du Yarmouk a collaboré avec eux en tant que partenaire scientifique. C'est l'un des principaux partenaires financiers de ce projet.

Le site a fini par recouvrir une importance internationale. En effet, il est différent des autres sites néolithiques, se distinguant par ses découvertes archéologiques et la vaste superficie dont il jouit, sans mentionner le fait qu'il fut continuellement habité durant des périodes successives (environ 7250-4500 av. JC).

Il est certain que les habitants d'Aïn Ghazal ont pratiqué des cultes rituels divers et ont eu de multiples croyances. Les fouilles jusqu'à présent permettent de penser que la magie a joué un rôle important dans leur existence. Ceci a été révélé par les figures humaines et animalières qui ont été découvertes sur le site. Le culte des ancêtres, notamment les dirigeants, a joué le même rôle dans leur vie religieuse.

Les plus importantes parmi ces découvertes sont les statues en plâtre, dont deux ensembles ont été découverts en 1983 et 1985. Plus de trente statues ont été identifiées, certaines entières (90cm de moyenne).

Il semblerait que la femme ait joué un rôle important dans les sociétés agricoles il y a plus de 10.000 ans. Elle représente

élément de fertilité et constitue la cause principale de l'augmentation du nombre de maillon-d'œuvre. C'est pourquoi elle fut représentée enceinte. Outre le ventre, les hanches et les seins ont été mis en évidence.

Quant aux figurines animales du site, elles ont été faites le plus souvent d'argile, de plâtre et de calcaire. Ces effigies représentent des mammifères, et surtout des taureaux dont le corps est percé par des lames de silex, ce qui permet de penser que les animaux de cette espèce servaient de sacrifices pour se rapprocher de la divinité.

Plusieurs sanctuaires

Quelques édifices ont été découverts puis étudiés à Ain Ghazal. Les résultats de ces recherches permettent de supposer qu'ils avaient une signification cultuelle. Ils remontent à environ 6500-6000 avant J.C. L'un des plus importants d'entre eux a été découvert en 1903 dans la région située au nord du site. Cet édifice remonte à l'époque qui s'étend de 6500 à 6000 avant J.C. Les archéologues, participant aux fouilles, ont constaté que cet édifice a subi de nombreuses modifications et des ajouts au niveau architectural, pour épouser en fin de compte une forme circulaire, dont le diamètre atteint les trois mètres.

Au centre de son sol dallé de pierres polies et peint en rouge, se trouve un tassé de 40 cm de diamètre comportant 4 ouvertures symétriques dont la fonc-

tion demeure mystérieuse. Une chose est certaine: ces ouvertures n'ont pas été utilisées par l'évacuation de l'eau ou de tout autre liquide.

Un édifice rectangulaire datant de l'époque de la culture de la région du Yarmouk (environ 5500-4500 av.JC) a aussi été découvert dans la région d'Aïn Ghazal. Au milieu du mur sud, en forme de courbe, de cet édifice, se trouve une pierre construite sur un angle droit. Un édifice identique, auquel a été attribué un caractère rituel, a été découvert à Byblos au Liban.

Il est possible de penser que les édifices cultuels qui ont été construits sur ce site peuvent être considérés comme les premiers sanctuaires découverts jusqu'à nos jours dans la région du Proche-Orient. Ces découvertes enrichissent considérablement les connaissances concernant les croyances et les religions des sociétés agricoles dans cette région. Mais il n'existe aucun lien entre le dogme du culte des ancêtres répandu dans nombre de régions du Proche-Orient actuel, et la nature de la religion ou des rites pratiqués par les habitants d'Aïn Ghazal, qui ont utilisé ces édifices comme sanctuaires.

Toutefois, l'existence de ces sanctuaires indique l'existence d'une société cohérente organisée autour d'un culte. ■

Gary Rolevson et
Zeidan Kafafi

*Article extrait des
Nouvelles scientifiques de
France et du Proche-Orient,
et traduit par Nabil Aouian.*

Gary Rolevson et
Zeidan Kafafi

Article extrait des
Nouvelles scientifiques de
France et du Proche-Orient,
et traduit par Nabil Aujan.

Archéologie et technologie

Dix années après l'exposition du Musée du Luxembourg, les trésors archéologiques jordaniens reviennent à Paris. Une exposition intitulée «La voie royale. 9000 d'art au royaume de Jordanie», avait en effet déjà permis au public français fin 1986 de découvrir de nombreuses trésors archéologiques jordaniens.

Cette exposition réservait aussi déjà à l'époque une place à l'art contemporain jordanien, avec notamment Fahrelnissa Zeid, Ahmad Nawash, Wijdan, Ali Jabri ou Ammar Kham-mash.

C'est cette fois au cœur même du centre parisien de la culture arabe, l'Institut du monde arabe, que le royaume hachémite présentera son riche passé. L'exposition « Sur les pas des archéologues » a pour but de faire découvrir au visiteur à la fois les principaux sites historiques de Jordanie et les technologies qui permettent de les restaurer ou de les mettre en valeur.

Pour la première fois en Europe, cinq statues d'Ain Ghazal seront présentées au public, ainsi que le rouleau de cuivre de Qumrân. Une des statues démembrera par la suite au musée du Louvre où elle devrait rester trente ans. Une maquette présentant pour la première fois une restitution des peintures omeyyades du site de Qusayr Amra sera elle aussi exposée à l'Institut du monde arabe (voir encadré). ■

Ousayr Amra

Situé à environ 80 kilomètres à l'Est d'Amman, le site de Qusayr Amra fait partie du circuit touristique des châteaux du désert. Ces bains omeyyades du 8ème siècle sont un joyau de l'art islamique en Jordanie. A l'occasion de l'exposition «Sur les pas des archéologues», une maquette représentant les volumes extérieurs de ces bains et les peintures intérieures dans leur état restitué sera présentée. Des aquarells réalisées au début du siècle de ce même site par l'explorateur tchèque Musil seront aussi exposés à l'Institut du



monde arabe. Cette campagne de travaux graphiques exhaustifs a été réalisée à la demande du département jordanien des Antiquités par l'Institut français du Proche-Orient, et essentiellement par Claude Vibert-Guigue, qui travaille maintenant depuis sept ans sur ce site. L'Iflapo, en collaboration avec l'Ambassade de France d'Amman et le département des Antiquités, a procédé à de nombreuses opérations sur ce site ces dernières années. En plus d'un état des lieux complet, il a effectué des fouilles et des sondages pour mieux connaître les phénomènes de dégradation que connaissent ces bâtiments en réalisant notamment le pavage intérieur. Et, plus récemment, il a assuré la reconstruction partielle de la noria qui puisait l'eau pour ces bains omeyyades. ■

Une nouvelle lecture du rouleau de Qumrân

Restauré en France, le rouleau de cuivre de Qumrân a été officiellement remis à sa majesté la reine Nour à l'occasion de l'inauguration de la saison jordanienne. Cependant, ce rouleau restera encore quelque temps en France et sera présenté à l'Institut du monde arabe en juin prochain. Un rouleau qui, grâce à des procédés modernes de restauration, offre aujourd'hui une nouvelle interprétation.

Le 11 mars dernier, en présence de sa majesté la reine Nour de Jordanie et de Pierre Rosenberg, Président-directeur du musée du Louvre, Edmond Alphandéry, président d'Electricité de France, a remis au royaume hachémite de Jordanie le rouleau de cuivre de la mer Morte, restauré par EDF dans le cadre d'une convention de mécénat technologique et scientifique avec la direction des Antiquités de Jordanie. Ce rouleau sera exposé à la mi-juin dans le cadre de l'exposition consacrée à la Jordanie à l'Institut du monde

arabe, avant de rejoindre Amman. Une réplique est actuellement présentée au Printemps.

Le rouleau de cuivre de la mer morte, vieux de près de 2000 ans, aussi appelé rouleau de cuivre de Qumrân, intrigue depuis plus de quarante ans les archéologues et aiguillonne l'imagination de chercheurs de trésors et romanciers à sensation. Il fut découvert en 1952 par Henri de Conzenon, de l'Ecole biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem à l'intérieur d'une grotte près de Qumrân.

retrouvés en 1947 les célèbres manuscrits de la mer morte, dans le désert de Judée. Qumrân était un centre monastique occupé par un groupe d'hommes de la communauté essénienne. Celle-ci formait un mouvement séparé, écarté du Temple de Jérusalem et ayant coupé les liens avec le reste du judaïsme vers 150 avant J.C. Le site fut détruit par la légion romaine en 68 après J.C., en route vers Jérusalem, dont le siège tomba en 70.

parchemins. Lors de sa découverte, l'objet se présentait sous la forme de deux petits rouleaux. Leurs extrémités comportaient des trous de rivetage qui coïncidaient par superposition, montrant ainsi qu'à l'origine, ces deux petits rouleaux ne formaient qu'un élément. Le rouleau porte des inscriptions sur sa face interne, gravées dans le métal à petits coups de burin.

A l'époque de la découverte du rouleau, il était alors impos-

Je l'Université de Manchester, où le professeur Baker, du Collège de Technology, réalisa le découpage et la consolidation de l'objet. Il avait en effet fallu se résigner à scier les deux petits rouleaux en vingt-trois segments demi-cylindriques. Cette opération avait provoqué le décollement de nombreux petits fragments.

tre éventuellement un meilleur déchiffrement du texte, resté lacunaire par endroits.

La direction des Antiquités du Royaume de Jordanie a donc demandé en novembre 1993 le concours d'Électricité de France pour réaliser, dans le cadre d'une convention de coopération technologique et scientifique, l'expertise, la restauration et la conservation du rouleau de cuivre. Grâce à cette opération, la communauté scientifique dispose pour la première fois de nouveaux outils pour poursuivre l'étude et l'interprétation de ce document unique parmi les manuscrits de la mer morte. Le rouleau original regagnera lui prochainement le Musée d'Amman. ■

Le Jourdain

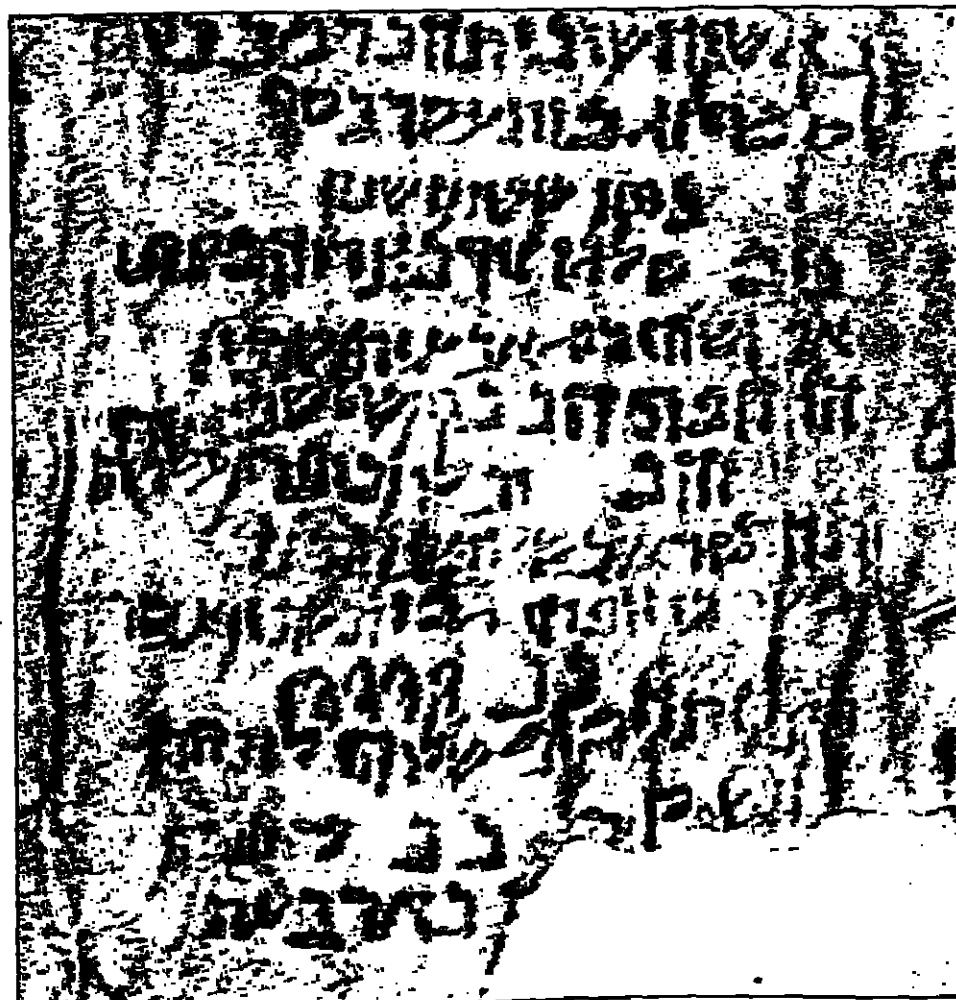
La thèse du trésor du Temple abandonnée

Le rouleau de cuivre est considéré comme un document majeur dans l'ensemble des découvertes faites à Qumrân. Depuis l'intervention effectuée sur le rouleau à Manchester en 1956, des discussions passionnées ont lieu parmi les épigraphistes et historiens au sujet de sa provenance et de ses différentes interprétations.

Différentes hypothèses coexistent, plusieurs points restent obscurs et controversés. Pour certains, le rouleau est un texte imaginaire. Mais pour tous les spécialistes, le rouleau peut se révéler riche d'informations sur le contexte historique de la destruction du Temple de Jérusalem par les troupes de Titus en 70 après J.C. En effet, le rouleau pourrait constituer l'énumération des richesses du Temple, mises en sûreté avant sa destruction.

Cette hypothèse est aujourd'hui remise en cause par la nouvelle interprétation proposée par l'Abbé Puech et dont dispose désormais la communauté scientifique. « Il me paraît maintenant acquis que ce rouleau déposé dans la troisième grotte à manuscrits appartient à la Communauté de Qumrân et qu'il a été placé dans la grotte la plus éloignée du site dans les jours ou les mois qui ont précédé sa chute en 68 de notre ère. Autant qu'il a été possible de les identifier grâce à ces nouvelles lectures, les vacheries se situent pour moitié environ autour de Jéricho et Qumrân et autour de Jérusalem, particulièrement au sud et à l'est de la ville sainte; quelques autres dans le Cédron qui relie ces deux régions, avec, en fin de liste, trois localités en Samarie. Pour la première fois, ces toponymes me semblent fournir une précieuse indication concernant la géographie des implantations esséniennes presque exclusivement judéennes, ce qui ne saurait étonner étant donné le noyau sacerdotal du groupe. Mais on ne trouve nulle trace du Mont Nebo ou d'autre site en Jordanie comme il est maintenant proposé.

une lecture logique, je recommande une interprétation simple: les biens et possessions des groupes esséniens, donc la Règle exigeait de ses membres la mise en commun, ont été généralement cachés dans leurs propriétés ou dépendances, dans des cachettes confiées au soin des divers responsables qui en avaient toujours le libre accès. (...) Grâce aux travaux qui en avaient l'ontologique et scientifique (EDP...), j'ai ainsi pu écarteler et résoudre la thèse qui tendait à situer d'une liste de cachettes du trésor officiel du Temple de Jérusalem dans le désert, à Jéricho, à Jérusalem et ailleurs en Palestine, à la barbe des légions romaines assiégées en Ville sainte. ■



Le rouleau de Oumrân restauré sera présenté en juin à l'Ima-



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Une saison touristique

Hugues Parant

Les Français en quête de nouvelles destinations

M. Hugues Parant, directeur français du Tourisme, était en Jordanie à la fin du mois dernier. Il analyse le potentiel touristique du royaume hachémite qui devrait, selon lui, devenir une destination courue des voyageurs français.

Des officiels jordaniens ont récemment qualifié la France de marché touristique européen le plus prometteur pour la Jordanie. Partagez-vous cet avis?

Tout à fait. On sait que parmi les marchés les plus intéressés par les découvertes naturelles, et notamment les sites désertiques, les clients européens sont de très loin les plus attirés. On sait par ailleurs que des que l'on met l'accent sur l'aspect culturel, l'attraction des clients européens est infiniment plus facile que l'attraction des clients américains ou asiatiques. Et parmi ces clients européens, on sait que la clientèle française a un caractère très particulier: c'est d'être attirée plus que tout autre clientèle par des deux produits. Or, il se trouve que la Jordanie dispose de deux éléments.

On peut prendre par exemple deux exemples qui se situent à 3 ou 4 heures de Paris et qui sont susceptibles d'offrir les mêmes produits que la Jordanie. Le Maroc, avec 70 à 80 % de Français pour la clientèle des villes, alors que 80% de la clientèle d'Agadir est allemande. Et la Tunisie, qui connaît la même situation. C'est bien la preuve que pour une même distance, les Français vont plutôt vers la culture et les Allemands vers le balnéaire.

Ne pensez-vous pas que le choix du Maroc ou de la Tunisie soit, pour les Français, lié à l'aspect francophone de ces pays?

Non. C'est beaucoup plus une question de distance et de temps. Dans la répartition du temps de loisir des Français, on constate un raccourcissement de 5 jours des vacances d'été, ce qui est quand même important, et en revanche, la multiplication des départs en vacances. On constate depuis 2 ans un allongement des week-end, et des vacances d'hiver quasiment généralisées. Aujourd'hui, un Français sur deux part en vacances d'hiver en dehors de ses vacances d'été. On est en train d'assister à une diminution du nombre des week-ends et à un allongement de ces week-ends. Et évidemment, quand on dispose de 4 ou 5 jours, voire d'une semaine maximum, on voit bien que la moyenne distance est une nécessité.

Pensez-vous que la Jordanie doit être rattachée à d'autres destinations (Syrie, Jérusalem...) pour être vendue?

Je suis convaincu, mais pas sûr d'être suivi, que l'ensemble Pétra-Wadi Rum et Aqaba, si Aqaba se développait, notamment à travers une image forte de plongée ou de bateau, constitue un ensemble très intéressant sur le format d'un séjour

d'une semaine. En revanche, tout ce qui entoure Amman, au sud jusqu'à Kérak et au nord du pays, constitue un voyage groupé avec la Syrie. Il y a donc un produit Syrie-Jordanie du nord et un produit de découverte, de haute gamme et très diversifié, au sud. Il faut pour cela que la qualité des hôtels suive. Je pense par exemple au village de Taybet Zaman, à côté de Pétra. Je trouve cela non seulement remarquable mais c'est ce que je crois avoir vu de plus remarquable en matière d'intégration et de qualité dans l'ensemble des déplacements que j'ai pu faire au Machrek ou dans les quelques pays du Moyen-Orient que je connais.

Dans quelles proportions pensez-vous que le nombre de touristes français en Jordanie puisse augmenter?

L'objectif du doublement de touristes français en Jordanie d'ici un à deux ans n'est pas un objectif irréaliste du tout. Quand on regarde le nombre de touristes français attirés par l'étranger, on constate que la France est certes le plus grand pays d'accueil, mais aussi le quatrième pays émetteur du monde. Sur l'ensemble des sé-



jours que les Français passent à l'étranger (31 millions de séjours), ils en passent 0,01% en Jordanie. L'enjeu du doublement doit donc être facilement réalisable.

Il y a une tendance croissante des Français à vouloir sortir de leur pays. Or, des Français sont attirés par de nouvelles destinations. Il existe des modes. Il y a deux ans c'était Cuba, et un

sont frémir depuis maintenant six mois ou un an la mode de la découverte de la Syrie et de la Jordanie. La présence de nombreux tours-opérateurs français en visite ces derniers temps en Jordanie atteste de cette tendance.

Propos recueillis par Olivier Bras

Marwan Khouri

La richesse de la Jordanie

Directeur du comité jordanien du tourisme, Marwan Khouri espère que la saison jordanienne donnera l'envie aux Français de venir découvrir la richesse de la Jordanie.

Une saison jordanienne a pour la première fois lieu à l'étranger, en France. Marwan Khouri, directeur du comité jordanien du tourisme (CJT), explique comment l'idée de cette saison est née et quelles seront ses retombées pour la Jordanie.

Comment cette saison jordanienne a vu le jour?

Elle a été initiée par le ministère jordanien du Tourisme et M. l'Ambassadeur de France en Jordanie, M. Bernard Bajot. Comme c'est toujours le cas pour ce type d'opération de promotion touristique se déroulant à l'étranger, le secteur privé a lui aussi participé à l'organisation de cette saison. Le Comité jordanien du tourisme, né en avril 1996, est un organisme semi-public qui assure la liaison entre le ministère du Tourisme et les opérateurs privés.

De quelle façon allez-vous promouvoir le tourisme en Jordanie pendant cette saison?

Nous avons déjà commencé

avec la promotion dans la presse. Nous avons invité des journalistes travaillant pour d'importants magazines

français à se rendre en Jordanie. Ils ont pu se rendre compte de la richesse qu'offre ce pays. Nous avons de nombreux sites, beaucoup d'activités et des itinéraires qui méritent de passer au moins huit jours en Jordanie.

De plus, nous avons récemment mis en place une page sur Internet pour orienter les amateurs du voyage en leur présentant la Jordanie. Et depuis quelques jours, une campagne de publicité a débuté dans les couloirs du métro parisien, avec des clichés du Wadi Rum ou de Pétra.

Quelles répercussions peuvent avoir une telle manifestation culturelle pour la Jordanie?

Voilà deux ans, la Syrie bénéficiait d'une opération similaire en France. Celle-ci a connu un important succès, et le nombre de touristes se rendant en Syrie a triplé à la suite de cette saison. Nous espérons qu'il en sera de même pour la Jordanie.

Propos recueillis par Oroub el Abed

La France est actuellement le troisième pays européen en ce qui concerne le nombre de visiteurs, après l'Angleterre et l'Allemagne. Nous avons donc cherché à connaître ce qui attire les Français. Nous savons qu'ils aiment beaucoup les produits touristiques orientés vers la culture, ou bien offrant des richesses naturelles telles que le désert. Pour augmenter le tourisme en Jordanie, il est important de diversifier les produits.

Comment pensez-vous vendre la destination Jordanie?

Nous vendons la Jordanie comme une destination culturelle et naturelle, et non pas seulement comme un site archéologique. Nous possédons d'autres produits que Pétra.

Par quelles autres initiatives passe la promotion de la Jordanie à l'étranger?

Nous participons au maximum d'expositions touristiques à l'étranger, dans la limite de nos budgets. Et nous sommes en train d'étudier si, au lieu d'avoir un simple bureau de tourisme en France, nous ne pourrions pas avoir une maison jordanienne en France qui donnerait une image plus précise des traditions et de l'artisanat qui existent en Jordanie.

Propos recueillis par Oroub el Abed

Le Khazneh, trésor de Pétra (en haut à gauche), les étendues désertiques du Wadi Rum (à gauche) et la ville gréco-romaine de Jérash (en haut à droite).

Propos recueillis par Oroub el Abed

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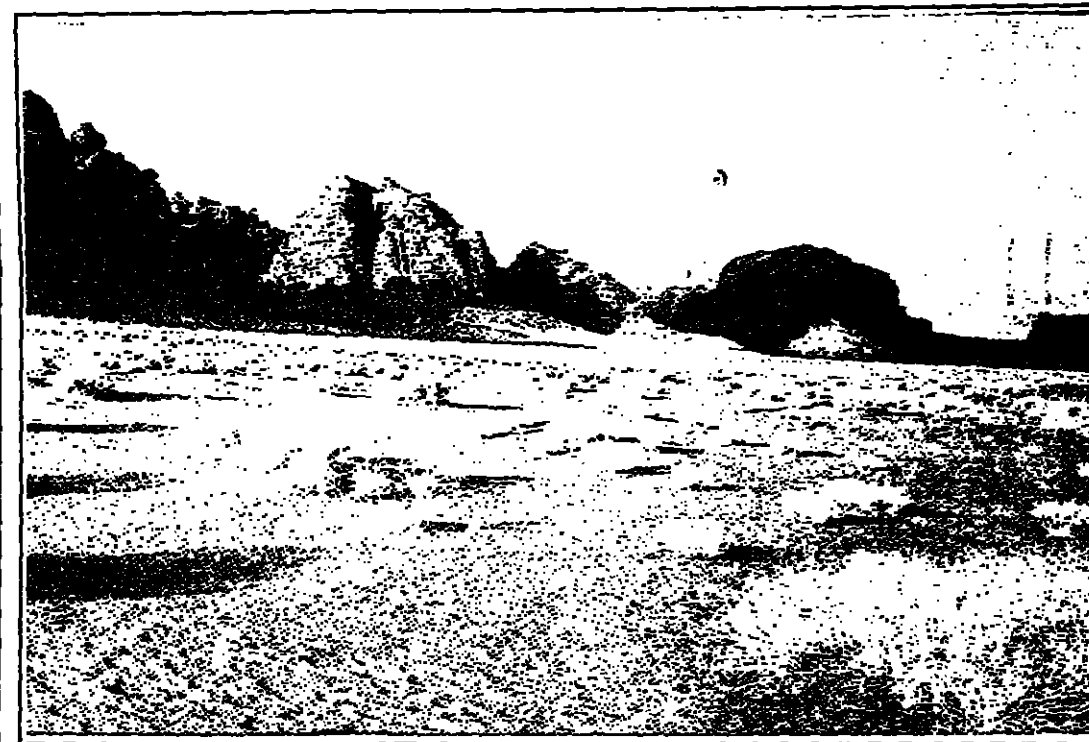
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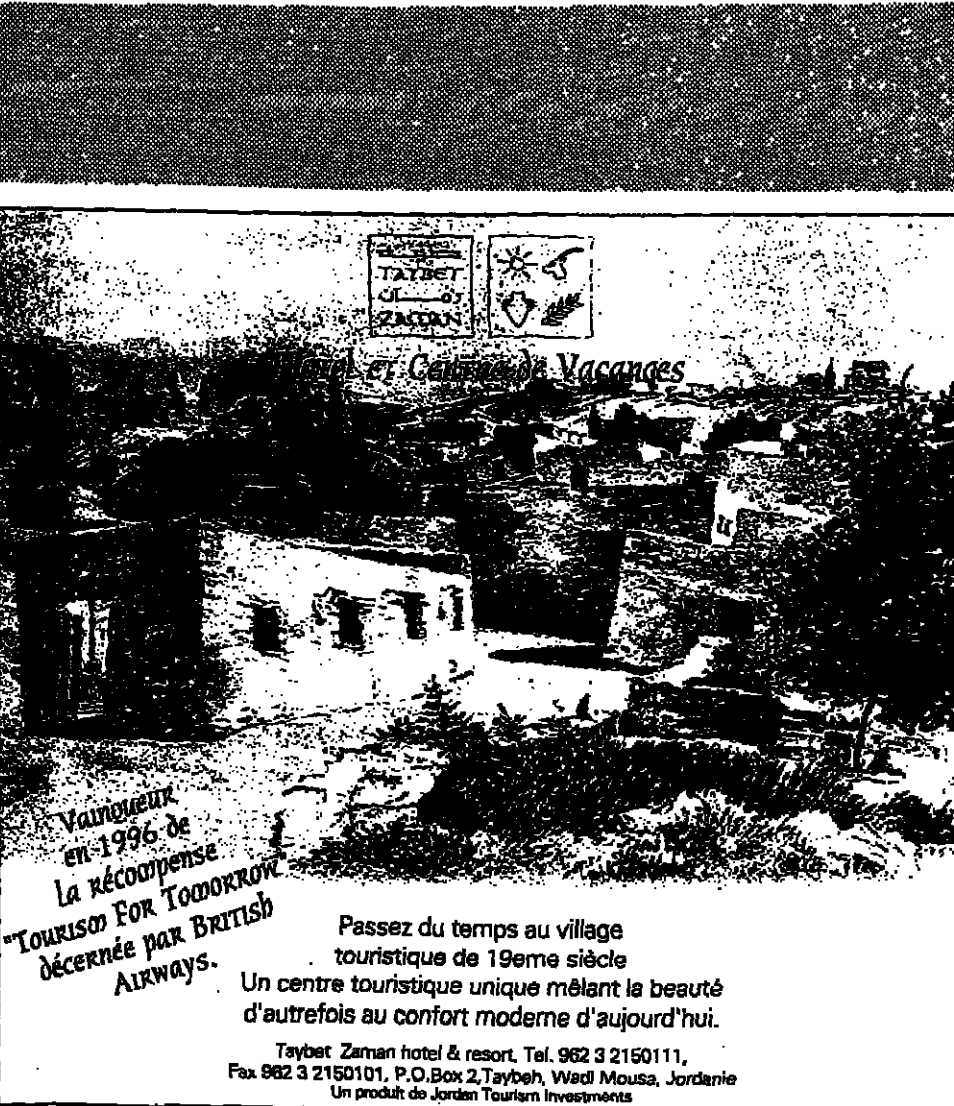
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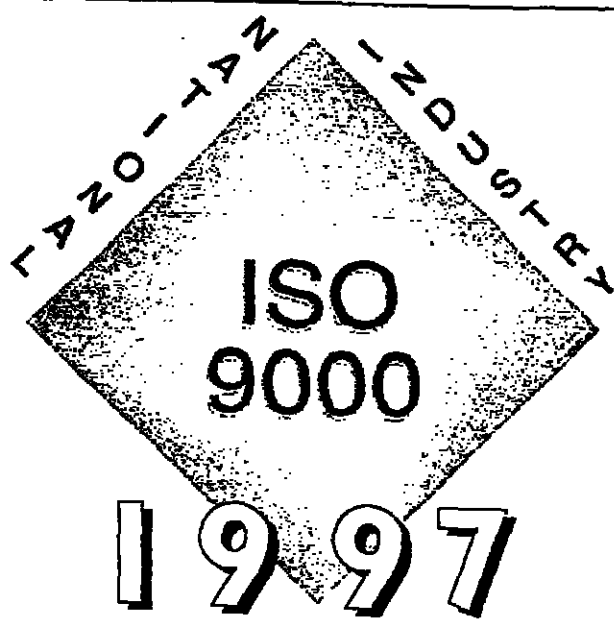
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JEDCO develops general awareness of ISO 9000 in Jordan

IN THE light of the global tendency to improve the quality of industrial products to meet international standards, many manufacturers in the world are paying much attention to meeting these requirements.

The International Organization for Standards (ISO) is a worldwide federation of bodies from 100 countries.

The ISO is a non-governmental organization set up in 1947 to promote the standardization and facilitate the international exchange of goods and develop cooperation in the spheres of intellectual, scientific, technological and economic activity.

International standards contribute to making life simpler, and increase reliability and effectiveness of goods and services.

Mr Moayad Samman, manager of the Export Development Department in the Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centers Co., (JEDCO) told *The Star* that Jordanian companies need to be ISO 9000 certified to compete in the international arena. Excerpts follow:

What is the ISO?
The quality system as defined by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in its 9000 series.

of Standards was developed as a response to challenge increasing market globalization.

It has been widely adopted by over 70 countries in the developed and developing worlds. Today, there are 20,000 companies that are ISO 9000 certified in the world.

These standards are viewed as powerful tools for effective management, not only of product quality but also of all business operation—irrespective of their sector.

The ISO 9000 series consist of 1900 standards and supplementary guidance standards.

The five core standards are ISO 9001—1994 quality management and quality assurance standards part 1: guidelines for selection and use.

This standard clarifies principal quality related concepts and provides guidance for the selection and use of the ISO 9000 family of Standards for quality assurance and management.

ISO 9001:1994 quality systems is a model for quality assurance in design, development, production, installation and servicing. ISO 9002:1994 quality systems: a model for quality assurance in production, installations and servicing.

ISO 9003:1994 quality systems: a model for quality assurance in final inspection and test.

ISO 9004:1994 quality management and quality system elements: part 1: guidelines. This standard is meant for internal use by the organization and provides guidance in designing and implementing a quality system so that they can meet market needs and achieve overall success.

What is the difference between product standards and system standards?

The concept of quality system is comparatively new and most people confuse "product quality standard" and "quality system standard." The product quality standard specifies various characteristics or parameters which the product must meet if it is to conform to the product standard. The quality system standard such as "ISO 9000" defines the method of managing quality in a company to ensure that products conform to quality level that it has set for itself.

What is its scope of application?

Since ISO 9000 defines a system for managing quality in generic terms, it applies universally to all products and services. This standard is equally relevant to companies manufacturing different types of products; organizations in various service sec-



Samman

tors such as hotels, hospitals, universities, etc. can implement such standards.

Other organizations are implementing the ISO 9000 to comply with contractual requirements set by international importers, which means that the implementation of the ISO 9000 enhances the chances for organizations to export to quality conscience countries. Becoming ISO 9000 certified gives organizations the chance to participate in international tenders and compete with other quality products, however it doesn't guarantee selling the products in such markets. The quality of the product is the determining factor.

What is the importance of the ISO 9000 certificate to Jordanian companies?

There are several benefits of implementing the ISO 9000 in organizations, since the standards help transform an ad hoc method of quality control into an organized and cost effective quality management system by combining high quality with low

cost, this can give the company a tremendous competitive advantage.

Those involve the improvement inside organizations. The primary purpose of implementing any quality system is to inspire confidence among customers that the company is capable of producing products at a consistent level of quality all the time.

What are the ISO 9000 implementations in Jordan?
The first awareness of the ISO 9000 standard in Jordan started in 1993, and the first company that received the ISO 9000 was Jafila, it became ISO 9000 certified in 1995.

Presently, 22 Jordanian companies have become certified, there are five companies from the service sector. About 125 Jordanian companies are in the process of implementing ISO 9000 and within the coming two years, more than 150 companies are expected to become ISO 9000 certified in Jordan.

Continued on Page 16

ARAMEX Jordan on list of international recognition for its quality

AMMAN—The Jordanian branch of the global transportation company, ARAMEX, has been awarded the prestigious ISO 9002 certificate—becoming one of the first express and freight forwarding companies in Jordan to receive the recognition.

"We did expect the certification," said Hazem Malhas, corporate vice president of the international courier company, "but it was really gratifying to receive an international seal of approval for our hard work, and our quest for quality."

The ISO 9002 certification puts ARAMEX Jordan among the elite companies who have fulfilled its requirements—focusing as it does, on control procedures and documentation designed to ensure consistently high quality of service.

In 1990, ARAMEX England also received the award on behalf of the international express, air cargo and distribution firm. With the aim of becoming one of the first Middle East organizations to do so, all ARAMEX offices should be qualified by this year.

Commenting on the honor, Malhas said: "ARAMEX Jordan sets a precedent in the community. We are aware of this every day, throughout our work and the services we provided for businesses. As the only Jordanian firm who underwent re-engineering to better our services for customers, we feel this proves that we are a dynamic organization, with a lot of energy."

ARAMEX's foresight and energy have propelled this Middle East company from being a regional success to an international player, with offices in major cities all around the world, offering a wide range of services, including time-definite express, air cargo, logistics and domestic distribution.

"Gaining certification under ISO—covering all aspects of our operations—is an extension of our own global on-going quality program," said Osama Fataleh, ARAMEX's Jordan country manager. "With this certification, we feel that we have to continue to set improved standards in the industry to maintain the high quality of service standards for which we are renowned."



ARAMEX CEO, Fadi Ghannour

ISO 9000 show, a unique venue and opportunity for Jordanian companies



AMMAN (Star)—In the light of the much concern given to quality standards in world trade and the tendency to go for a free market policy, liberalization and global competitiveness, it has become urgent to follow

high standard measures to guarantee the approval of industrial products. ISO 9000, the most acceptable system for quality, has become the key element for

Continued on Page 16

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ISO 9000 show, a unique venue and opportunity for Jordanian companies

Continued

international markets and the flow of exports from developing to developed states. It is the policy of the Higher Council for Science and Technology to co-operate with national institutions and the industrial sector to hold activities aimed at enhancing the rapid technological development. The first ISO 9000 show in Jordan, was opened under the patronage of HRH Prince Hassan at Philadelphia Hotel yesterday, Wednesday.

The show was opened by HRH Prince Faisal, who was deputizing for Prince Hassan. Driven by the desire to prove their competitiveness and quality all over the world, a large number of Jordanian industrial concerns have since 1994 been embarking on the process of ISO certification.

There are over 100 Jordanian companies who are awaiting ISO 9000 certification by the end of next year. The idea of organizing the ISO 9000 show emerged few months ago and through cooperation between Expo Jordan and the Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST).

Being the first of its kind in the region, the ISO 9000 show is a unique event that provides manufacturers and visitors with

a golden opportunity to be acquainted with our industrial achievements.

Mrs Nancy Baker, the assistant secretary general of the HCST told *The Star* that the Council always provides support for any creative and new idea.

About 40 private companies from various industrial and service sectors are taking part in the expo. Among them 17 concerns have already been ISO 9000 certified, while there are six of them in the process of getting this certificate.

Participating companies include Jolif, El Zay Ready-wear Manufacturing Co., Industrial Commercial and Agricultural Co. Rum, Jordan Phosphate Mines, Jordan-Kuwait Bank, ARAMEX and HOPPEKE.

The director of Expo Jordan Mohammad Zyadat said that the show is not targeted at material profit or gain; it is aimed at giving the participating companies an opportunity to display their products, meet with their counterparts and speak about their own experience in receiving the ISO 9000 certificate.

Alongside the show, there will be scientific and specialized lectures given by those who have gone through the ISO 9000 experience.

They are given the chance to brief the audience about the difficulties they faced before becoming ISO 9000 certified and explain their solutions and recommendations.

Mrs Baker says "we should apply a course for development and scientific research. That is SWOT: S stands for realizing our points of strength, W for weakness points, O for opportunities (making good use of them) and T for threats (to avoid them) and be aware of them."

She also called on participating concerns to coordinate and co-operate with their counterparts.

In one exhibition, she said, officials noticed that there were representatives from two companies, processing the same product, but none of them had an idea about the other or even thought of co-operating with each other.

This phenomenon should not exist, all Jordanian manufacturers and producers have the same ground and they share the



Baker

same aspirations and challenges. So why treat others as opponents. We are all partners in society and the role of one company should complement the role of the other and not cancel it."

There will also be scientific lectures and discussions dealing with ISO 9000, new concepts, stages for implementation, obstacles facing these implementations and what's after getting the ISO 9000



Management of Expo Jordan: Zyadat (center).

certificates. The ISO 9000 certificate is not an end itself, it is rather a means to achieve certain goal, that is enhance productivity and promote exports. It is a right step on track.

Mrs Baker and Mr Zyadat described the show to be the "Expo of the elite," and they hope that it would be a nucleus for a regional show of ISO 9000 Arab companies that would be organized in 1998.

JEDCO develops general awareness of ISO 9000 in Jordan

Continued

What kind of assistance is provided in this regard?

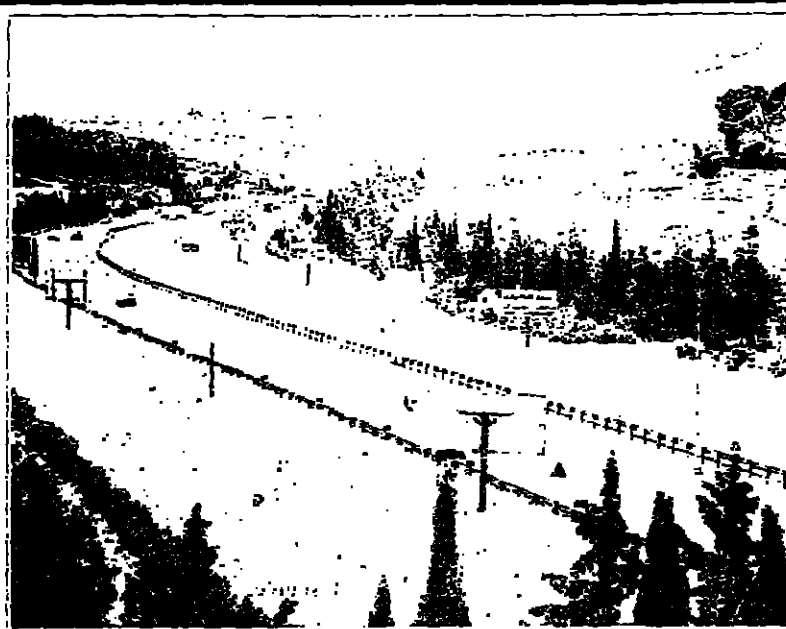
There are two kinds of assistance provided by different Jordanian institutions, the technical and financial assistance.

For Instance, JEDCO, the Higher Council for Science and Technology and the Industrial Development Bank are assisting Jordanian companies financially to develop their quality management systems according to the ISO 9000. Around half million Jordanian dinars were spent by these organizations for this purpose.

Technical assistance has been provided by JEDCO, Jordan Institution for Standards and Metrology, Amman Chamber of Industry, and the newly established Jordan Society of Quality.

As far as JEDCO is concerned, it has been involved in the subject of the ISO 9000 since its early beginnings and has been leading in providing technical and financial assistance for companies seeking ISO 9000 registration. Seven Jordanian companies are currently working through JEDCO to get the ISO 9000 certificate and it is expected that all of them will be certified in May this year. JEDCO has been active in developing the general awareness of ISO 9000 in Jordanian industrial concerns through many workshops and seminars conducted during the last two years.

The ISO 9000 Show coincides with a very momentous occasion and that is the birthday of his Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan. It symbolizes commitments of Jordanian companies to His Royal Highness's aspirations in building a modern industrial nation capable of facing the increased market globalization and challenges. The Show is an excellent opportunity for Jordanian companies to demonstrate their commitment to quality in a venue that is considered the first of its kind not only in Jordan but also in the region.



One of the engineering projects of CEC—Sajdi and Partners

CEC, consulting engineers with quality performance

THE CONSULTING Engineering Center (CEC) is an international firm established in Amman, in 1974 with branch offices in the Middle East and Africa. Mr Izzat Sajdi, the vice president of CEC told *The Star* that CEC is a registered company at the Union of Engineers under registration No. 1.

It is also classified by the Jordan Engineers Association as a consulting engineering firm Class A. CEC provides studies, design, supervision, and in setting up, equipping and staff training of government departments.

The firm's activities cover the fields of water and wastewater, dams, highways, bridges, buildings, airports, industry, geotechnical engineering, public utilities and rural development, economic planning studies, Water Tariff and Wastewater Tariff studies.

The firm utilizes a full computerized office, automation systems and

facilities, computer aided design and drafting, graphical presentation and animation.

CEC adopts a strict quality control assurance procedures (ISO 9001) to ensure that work is carried out up to international standards. CEC has built an excellent name for quality and became one of the successful consulting firms in the Middle East. The number of staff at CEC is 170 consisting 115 Technical and 55 Administrative. CEC is registered with the World Bank, Islamic Development Bank, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, FAO and many other funding agencies. CEC operate in many countries such as Egypt, Gambia, Kazakhstan, Lesotho, Lithuania, Maldives, Mauritius, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, West Indies, Yemen, and Zim-

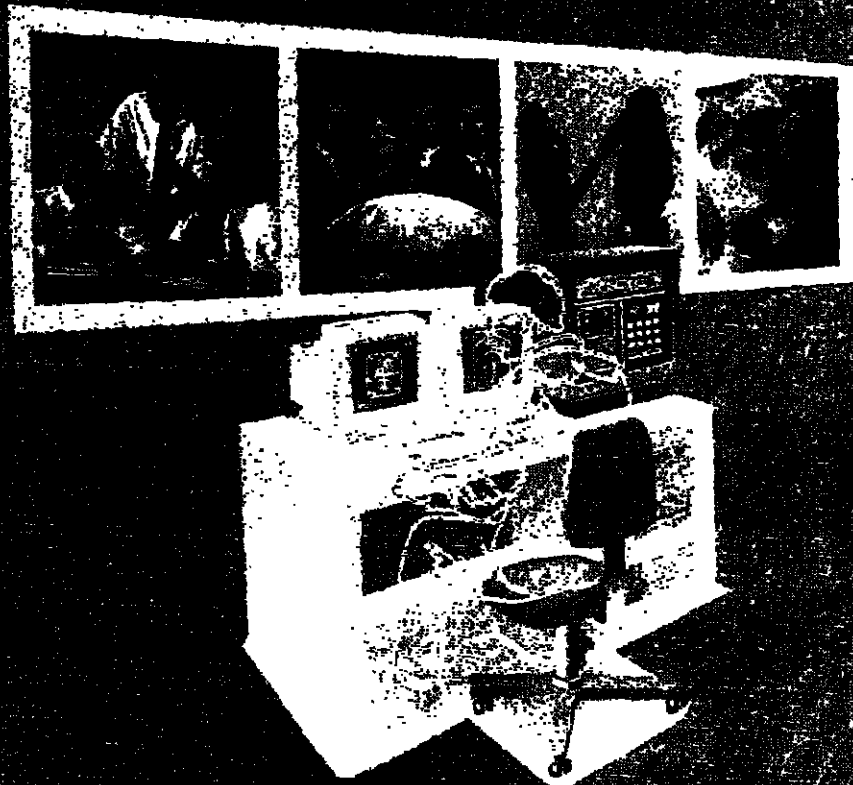


Izzat Sajdi

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Nashashibi & Ebbini Leader in paper-converting industry and forms

THE NASHASHIBI & Ebbini Company was the first in Jordan and the Middle East to produce computer forms and labels of all kinds. Since it was established in 1979, the company sought to develop new markets, and satisfy the requirements of clients. Today, it is a market leader in the region.

The company has a well-established customer base around the Arab world and is eager to develop markets in Asia, Europe, and Africa.

Nashashibi & Ebbini aims at reaching a level of workmanship in design, materials, layout and production equal to that of

any country in the world.

It's work in designing and producing computer forms and labels in all types, as well as printed labels in rolls and other technical and medical forms requires accuracy, reliability and comprehensive quality system. The company managed to maintain this and obtained the EN ISO 9001:1994 certificate from National Quality Assurance, UK.

As customers demand delivery schedules to count on, the company is committed to provide its clients with the service they desire.

It has been its objective to

stay in the leading edge with the latest advances in materials, equipment, and printing techniques used worldwide.

The company plays an important role in the development of the paper-converting industry in the Arab World through its participation in professional associations such as the Amman Chamber of Industry, the Arab Federation



Company's Managing Director, Othman Nashashibi

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By Charles

and Vera Halk

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upon the Italian

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than 100 were

choppy waters

and the uncertain

the violence at the

A rescue

vessels charged

last Monday

101 civilians

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police station.

Its arrival

day's harvest

passengers who

Albanian Navy

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on coast guard

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who had landed

assorted craft

of Albanian

landing here

Among the

of Albanian

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rying deserting

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By William D.M

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20 MARCH 1996
Middle East Beat
by Khairi Janbeh
Crime

20 MARCH 1996

W O R L D

THE STAR 17

Albanians continue to flee to Italy

By Charles Trueheart and Vera Haller

BRINDISI, Italy—The tide of refugees fleeing the chaos in Albania washed insistently upon the Italian coast last Monday, bringing to more than 6,600 the number of refugees who have fled to Italy in the last three days after making the crossing from the Albanian port of Durres.

A rusted Albanian navy vessel chugged into Brindisi last Monday night carrying 101 civilians. Italian naval authorities escorted the commandeered ship into the military section of the port, where the women and children were quartered for the night as the men were taken to the local police station.

Its arrival followed Sunday's harvest of 858 desperate passengers who arrived on an Albanian Navy frigate that ran aground a mile offshore. Italian coast guard personnel here tallied at 6,527 the number who had landed here on 130 assorted craft since the exodus of Albanian boat people began landing here five days ago.

Among the ships were much of Albanian Navy fleet, including torpedo boats, minesweepers and patrol boats carrying deserting officers and crew.

The refugees are fleeing chaos and bloodshed that erupted 10 days ago and gradually spread throughout the impoverished Balkan country. The violence, which has claimed at least 100 lives and rendered the government of President Sali Berisha helpless, exploded in the wake of a pyramid-scheme scandal that impoverished two-thirds of Albania's 5 million people.

As Italian authorities struggled to curtail the flow of ships and smaller craft ferrying terrified Albanians across the Adriatic Sea, the thousands who have managed to navigate the more than 40 miles to get here in the last five days have filled to overflowing the facilities used to house them: churches, gymnasiums, hospitals, low-rent hotels, parking structures, campgrounds and private homes.

The mayor of this principal coastal city, Lorenzo Maggi, said "Brindisi is completely saturated," even as Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi evoked both his country's frustration and its obligation. "We can't throw them into the sea," he said.

Italian authorities Monday began funneling the tide of fleeing Albanians, including families with young children, out of the suddenly overwhelmed Puglia region and northward to receiving centers in the Molise and Abruzzo regions. The prefect of Brindisi, Andrea Gentile, said "the problem is no longer just that of Puglia but that of all Italy," according to one news report.

In Osuni, 12 miles north of Brindisi, a clutch of about 20

young Albanian men was chafing Monday night after three days of detention in a former town jail put into service as a crowded dormitory.

"It was war. There were Klashnikovs and guns—children, men, everyone was shooting," recalled Altin Lika, 21, who arrived in Brindisi three days ago after making the crossing from the Albanian port of Durres.

He and the other young men were restless. "They promised us working papers, which would let us go to stay with our relatives in Italy," said Lika, who said his brother has lived in Italy for four years.

"But for three days we've been here and heard nothing. We don't know what is going to happen to us. We get a cappuccino in the morning and then nothing but pasta to eat," he said.

Italy, along with France and Greece, failed Sunday to persuade the European Union to dispatch more than a token force of advisers to Albania to quell the civil unrest.

Italy has borne the stress more than any other country; a much larger exodus of Albanians made for this rugged shore six years ago in the communist collapse. Some 20,000 landed here and were given temporary working papers before the Italian navy began turning nearly as many Albanians back.



An Albanian soldier comes under fire from secret police as he tries to help an ordinary citizen who has been shot in the leg

Prime Minister Prodi, speaking to reporters Monday, said, "We want to help those who need help, not those who have problems, or who make problems. ... Italy is doing a lot for Albania." Prodi said

Italy's position was firm, "not to open the door indiscriminately." The frenetic Albanians at the jail in Osuni wondered if their plight, and their country's, was of any interest to

Americans. "What do they think? Do they think badly of us?" asked one.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Albanian villagers mourn, ponder uncertain future

By Josh Friedman

BATHORE, Albania—Following Albanian custom, the Mera clan gathered last Monday in this makeshift village to mourn Sami Mera, one of about 100 Albanians shot to death in the chaos of recent days.

Black-clad women gathered in the kitchen of the small cinder-block home of Mera's uncle. About 15 men sat shoeless on homemade carpets in the living room, smoking furiously and trying to make sense of Mera's death, which occurred last Thursday as he stood in a crowd that was looting a nearby government arms depot.

"He was an innocent bystander," said his father, Dule. But Sami Mera's death remains as murky as the events now terrorizing Albanians.

Bathore is armed to the teeth, from pistols to anti-tank guns looted from the government. Everyone who has one insists he has a weapon only to defend his family from outside ruffians. All day in Bathore, the sound of nearby gunshots could be heard occasionally.

"People are worried when they go to sleep," said Behixhe Mera, Sami's cousin. "Maybe they'll never wake up. A bullet could come into the house during the night."

According to an informal poll of the mourners at the Mera gathering, there is

great fear about the future but little agreement as to who should lead the country if the current president, Sali Berisha, responds to public criticism by stepping down.

Berisha told a French radio station he intended to remain in office until new elections are held—by June—but will resign if his democratic party is defeated.

On the surface, Albania appeared to be returning to normal after several days of looting and lawlessness that have shaken Berisha's legitimacy. Cars and pedestrians crowded the streets of Tirana, Albania's capital, as people began returning to work. The streets remain empty at night because of a dusk-to-dawn curfew, enforced by armed civilians and a scattering of police. In nearby port cities, thousands of Albanians crowded the shore seeking a way out of the country by sea.

Already, nearly 7,000 have reached Italy, most in dangerously overloaded boats that have led to daring rescues in the Adriatic Sea.

In one, the Italian coast guard pulled 900 Albanians from a leaky gunboat sinking off Brindisi, Italy. In another, a US helicopter litened the darkness and US Marines and Navy seamen dove into the black waters to save 55 Albanians whose boat had capsized at twilight. The Americans also picked up 30 other

Albanians in a foundering ship. All were put aboard a US ship until officials decide what to do with them.

At the Mera gathering, even former supporters of Berisha seemed to feel his tenure was limited. "Berisha was removed from the political scene by events," said Shafiq Mera, 40, "but we need him to stay in power until a new election even if he's just a figurehead."

The circumstances of Sami Mera's death and Bathore's economic condition reflect the challenges facing Albania.

According to his relatives, Mera, 32, who left a wife and two young children, had recently resigned a commission in the Albanian military and was unemployed at his death. Berisha had recently purged more than half of Albania's professional officer corps, whose loyalty he could not count on, replacing them with political cronies.

The disaffection of the remaining officers and enlisted men is considered one of the reasons for the rapid collapse of the Albanian military when the public began looting military depots weeks ago in an angry reaction to being cheated by dishonest investment brokers of approximately \$1 billion.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Yeltsin, Russia's comeback kid, at it again

By Lee Hockstader and David Hoffman

MOSCOW—President Boris Yeltsin, discounted for months as terminally sick and a political corpse, has stormed back into control of the Russian government with all the fire and fury of a man determined to have at least one more hurrah.

For the tenth time in his stormy career, the Russian president has confounded nearly universal forecasts of his political demise. And for the first time in at least a year, he has given the impression that the Russian government might be gearing up for something beyond drift and paralysis.

Rebounding from heart disease, bypass surgery, double pneumonia and withering public attacks, Yeltsin has reasserted his authority by ordering a purge of his cabinet and has laid the groundwork for a new security relationship with the West despite widespread objections from political elites in Moscow.

As evidence of their leader's surging fortunes, Russians will be treated Thursday to the televised spectacle of a relatively robust and ambulatory Yeltsin greeting a huddling President Clinton when they meet in Helsinki.

Clinton, 16 years younger than Yeltsin, had knee surgery last Friday following a fall.

As for Yeltsin's health, sources say he still spends no more than two or three hours a day in his Kremlin office. Although he has seemed animated and cogent, his loss of more than 50 pounds gives him a gaunt appearance and makes him look a decade older than his 66 years.

But in the Russian media, Yeltsin's health is no longer an issue, even among the grumpier voices. One newspaper, *Nevskiyenayya Gazeta*, compared Yeltsin to C.C. Capwell, a character in the American soap opera "Santa Barbara," who was in a coma "for many episodes only to recover and make an awful mess of things."

Alexei Golovkov, chairman of the Russian parliament's budget committee, said, "Now that the president has recovered, things have begun to move."

The Russian leader's most

important push has come within his own government. In a decree last week, Yeltsin put dozens of top officials on notice for a major reshuffle that is predicted to produce the most heavily reformed government here in five years. A leaner cabinet lineup could be announced, along with the elimination or streamlining of entire ministries.



Ultimately he coasted to electoral victory by a comfortable margin.

Yeltsin's knack for dramatic comebacks has been more impressive than his administrative acumen, which observers here believe has aggravated the enormous problems facing the Russian government today. To many observers, his stern denunciations of the malfunctioning Russian government have all the sincerity of the police chief in the movie "Casablanca," who declares he is "shocked, shocked" by gambling as he palms his winnings from roulette.

Still, many reformers and most foreign diplomats in Moscow were heartened by the prominent new governmental position of Anatoly Chubais, who it is widely assumed will be assigned control of economic policy as the lone first deputy prime minister.

Chubais, 41, was the mastermind of Russian privatization—the massive sell-off of state companies and assets to the private sector—and of Yeltsin's reelection last year. If Chubais has a major

say in the composition of the forthcoming government, it could herald the most important move since the freeing of state-decreed prices in 1992 and the privatization program of 1992-94.

"If Chubais gets his way, it will without doubt be the most reformist government since 1992," a foreign diplomat here said. "In that sense it's very encouraging."

But any serious proposals will face formidable obstacles. Sources close to the government say they expect Yeltsin's reshuffle to wipe out some of the big ministries—railroads, perhaps, or communications—reassigning their functions to deputy prime ministers.

The idea is driven by the fact that many governmental ministries have become nothing more than corrupt lobbyingists—a situation Yeltsin and Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin have tolerated for years. But the new government, whatever its structure, may find it difficult to effect real change in a deeply entrenched bureaucracy.

Moreover, it has become clear that the Kremlin is calling fewer and fewer shots as power has devolved to the regions.

Recently, two Russian regions announced they were no longer going to send tax receipts to Moscow, since they receive so little in return. The Kremlin responded with threats and bluster. The debate is unresolved, but it illustrated the fragile ties holding the Russian federation together.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Major announces May 1 for election he may lose

By William D. Montalbano

LONDON—The long-anticipated call to arms finally came on a brilliant spring morning. Standing with a jaunty smile in a pink shirt before the prime minister's front door at 10 Downing Street on Monday, John Major invited Britain to a national election on 1 May that is expected to write his political epitaph.

After ritual consultation with Queen Elizabeth, Major's announcement of the election date ended months of political skirmishing, conjecture and maneuvering. Now, after 18 man-years of rule by his Conservative Party, Major is running for his life against a reborn Labor Party led by young centrist Tony Blair.

If there are no more surprises in the campaign than there were surrounding the election announcement, Blair will become Britain's Prime Minister by mid-May.

With polls showing a record Labor lead, the campaign is expected to be the most American-style Britain has ever seen: dirty, personality-driven, focused and scored on both sides by negative advertising. Traditional campaigning is expected to lead to Britain's first televised candidates' debate.

By Monday afternoon, Major had already mounted his soap box in Bedfordshire, north of London, the constituency where the Conservative campaign momentum turned the tide of a Labor lead in the 1992 elections.

"The people will decide over the next few weeks whether they want to continue with some of the best economic news that we have had for generations or whether it will be a return to the politics of socialism that brought this country to its knees in the '70s," said Major against a background of noisy pro-Labor demonstrators.

Blair, who has never held government office, has pulled a traditionally left-wing, blue-collar party to the political center in recasting Labor's look, its policies—and its appeal to middle-class Britain.

Dubbing himself "the eternal warrior against complacency," Blair welcomed Monday's election call, which came while he was visiting a London school. The election was good news, he said, because over the past year "very little has been happening in government" while Conservatives tried to engineer their fifth consecutive term in office.

"I want a new government ... with different values and



Tony Blair: The eternal warrior

different priorities to lead a national renewal," Blair said. He attributed Labor's growing popularity to the party's "massive" internal transformation, and "the fact that most people

look at the conservatives and think they are rather incompetent, rather tired, and offering rather poor leadership."

More than half of voters

queried in a recent poll said Labor was ahead because it is time for a change. The Conservatives, in power since the 1979 election of Margaret Thatcher, have a natural majority in Britain.

Blair must persuade voters that Labor has left behind its long-contentious socialist principles and is a safe, responsible middle-of-the-road alternative source of government. Under his leadership, Labor is as committed to free-market economics as the Conservatives, having officially abandoned support for the nationalization of public services and industries.

The six-week election campaign, nearly twice as long as usual, will offer Major and his party allies every opportunity to attack Blair's credibility and try to short-circuit the first Labor victory since 1974.

According to the polls, though, Labor's popularity is unprecedented, leading the conservatives 52-27 percent, according to this week's Sunday Times poll. The Labor lead grew from 18 percent to 25 percent from February to March despite a skin of good news from a Conservative government celebrating Europe's strongest economy.

Third party Liberal Democrats under Paddy Ashdown, favored by a steady 13 percent in the opinion polls, opened their campaign Monday with

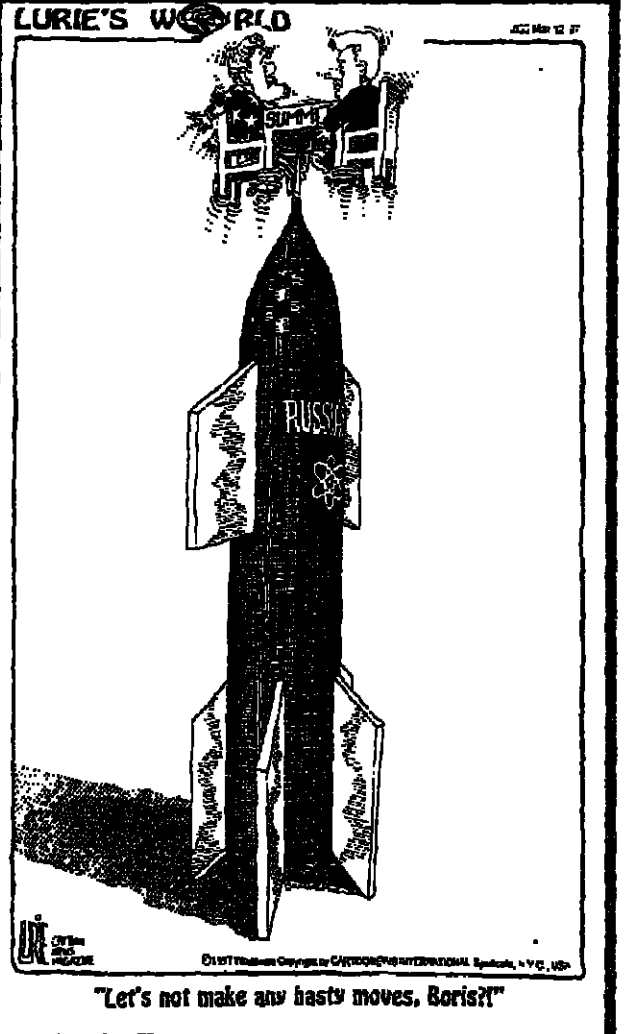
protests against plans for up to three head-to-head TV debates between Major and Blair. Ashdown wants to be included under British equal-access laws.

Ashdown says Conservatives and Labor have become Tweedie Dum and Tweedie Dec, with little to choose among their promise-anything campaign plans.

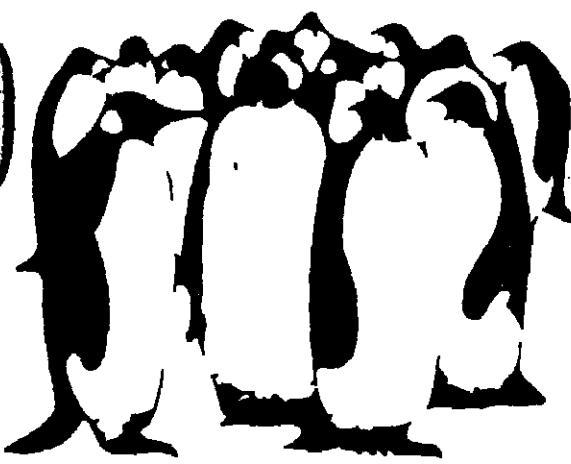
"At this election people have a clear choice between politics as usual and a fresh start; between promises they can't believe and clear, costed commitments to improve our schools and hospitals."

Both Major and Blair promise that there will be no new taxes; each says the other is lying. Ashdown, who says both are lying, proposes a 1 percent income tax increase to improve social programs. The main campaign issues are familiar to American voters: more jobs, less crime, stronger pensions, better schools and health care. The context is different here, though, for all major parties endorse Britain's welfare state. They simply seek to make it work more effectively in a graying post-industrial society.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



AROUND TOWN



● Cyprus Airways will begin operating new flights between Amman and 13 cities all over the world as from 2 April. This means that passengers can now arrive at these destinations on the same day they leave Amman. Cyprus Airways flies to 20 cities worldwide.

Regional Director of Cyprus Airways in Jordan and Palestine, Mr Awni Madaen says this measure is aimed at providing Jordanian passengers with the best of services.

Departures from Amman to Larnaka are now changed from the afternoon to 6.50 am every Wednesday and Saturday. This makes it easier for travellers to change planes to the countries they are travelling to on the same day.

Changes are also made on arrival time. Cyprus Airways will start landing at Queen Alia's International Airport on Tuesday and Friday afternoons. Hoping to secure comfort and service for its travellers, Cyprus Airways seeks to increase the size of its passengers going to different holiday destinations. Cyprus Airways celebrates this year its 50th anniversary and now ranks among the first 10 top airlines in the world.

Mr Madaen pointed out that Cyprus Airways maintains the confidence of Jordanian travellers who are increasing more than ever. They consider Cyprus Airways as the best and most comfortable airline to travel on.



Madaen

Muhammed Ali Shakir

'New style' in Arabic graphic art

By Anca de Maio
Special to The Star

Iraqi artist Muhammed Ali Shakir opened his fourth solo exhibition in Jordan on Monday at the French Cultural Center of a thunderous display. His present graphic art collection is focused on his latest technical innovations emerging from the fusion of lithography, etching and Arabic calligraphy into a colour-governed picturesque 'new style'.

His multifaceted background as a painter, graphic artist and calligrapher allows him to materialize his contribution to the configuration of a specific Arab identity in the broader context of Eastern cultures. "Many art trends in my country search for local originality in the faithless resources of Arabic calligraphy. And so do I," says the artist. "I was lucky to have as a master, the famous calligrapher Maed Al Zuhdi from 1955 to 1958, when I was studying calligraphy (evening classes) in parallel to painting (morning classes) at the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad."

His later studies of painting, lithography and etching (i.e. a process of engraving in which lines are scratched on a plate covered with a coating, and the parts exposed are subjected to acid) at the Fine Arts Academy in Rome (1961-1966) inspired him "to extract beautiful penmanship from its black-and-white static existence" as well as offered him the "know-how" of its transfer and insertion into the dynamic figurative contexts of his lithographs. "If Islamic calligraphy as ornamental art came into being at the time when human figuration was forbidden, in my work they do not exclude each other any more, on the contrary; letters, human bodies and still natures overlap in the same composition," he explains. Pure forms and elegant loopings, the letters have lost their original meaning and the words they form have turned into magic "love birds," ideal "ships" and illegible movement. Their new semantics intensifies the plastic significance of the composition as a whole.

Out of the various types of calligraphy:



"ruka", "taaleek", "diwani", "diwanigeli", "igazeh", etc. the "thuluth" and "nashk" types of writing are Shakir's favourite. "The first is most frequent in Islamic mosques, while the latter is the Quran calligraphy par excellence," he points out. The writing of the slogan "Bismillah Al Rahman Al Raheem" (i.e. "in the name of God") represents the key element of his calligraphic imagery, as it is the source of his two major symbols: the bird and the three-sailed ship. "This is my ship, my letter," stresses the artist pointing to a crown-like form on a big format picture in shading colors entitled "Brothers and a ship". "It is my own letter. I have imagined and seized it thanks to thorough training. I would like to develop an alphabet of my own and I keep working to this effect," he added. The pointless square "Kouflic murabba" writing is another source of imagistic inspiration and thematic originality: "Kufli and Sullifi", "Kouflic kayrawani", "Kufic letters."

Most of his latest etchings and linocuts (1996) have a binary structure as if the same cliché had been first under-exposed and then over-exposed. The compositions are vertically or horizontally almost symmetrical. The parallel color bands veil the original fresco-like compositions in a charming alternation of shade and light. "When I was a child in my native Hilla, I used to watch for hours the reflection of light on a huge brass bowl decorated with Arabic calligraphic inscriptions at the entrance of a cooking-oil shop next to our house," he recalls. "It was like a book open at the middle whose both bright and dark sides were a mystery to me," he says. "What I seek for in the transparency of my work may be also that inexplicable feeling I experienced before that humble but simply stunning recipient of oil."

Shakir also recalls the time when he was a 10-year old boy. "I was fascinated by colors. It used to cry for a red comb or for any other beautifully colored

object. I also cried for having what to draw and paint with. At school I was happy in the *mansam* as we were painting with pastel and water colors," he narrates. Ever since he has been true to his red-based color palette which also includes such matching colors as light green, blue and gray.

Color combination is a complex technique in the case of graphic art. One cliché carries one color but in contrast with the white paper it generates a two-element contrast as in the blue and white "Woman in blue" (1988), or the red and white "Red figures" (1992). "Sometimes the effect is more powerful in such pictures than in those where more colours are used," he thinks. Yet the "transparency" of his 12 'new style' two-cliche etchings results from the interference of three filtered colors or better say from the overlapped impression of the two clichés. "The cliché is the material I engrave. Sometimes it is a zinc plate that I first wash with detergent and then I wash all over. I cover it with transparent paper. I draw on it and afterwards I bathe everything in nitric acid for two minutes. Next I wash the way away with petrol and I ink the plate with colors and I stamp it on paper," he describes. "Lino-cutting and wood-cutting are the similar, but the material differs," he continues. "As for lithography, I use a very strong marble which I rub smooth with sand and water as well as with pumice, an other type of marble. Then I resort to three kinds of ink: chalk ink, ink deluted with water and typographic ink. Another two chemicals are added and everything is ready for stamping," he says.

Retired for 11 years from the Academy of Fine Arts in Baghdad where he used to teach painting, lithography, etching, calligraphy and photography, he carries on working and displaying his latest experiments and innovations. He feels inspired by painting and tries to translate plastic art into graphic art and vice versa. "I do not destroy the old clichés for I might recycle them into something new," he confesses. He has several plans for the future among which is a possible photo exhibition in Jordan next year.

A theater festival on way

By Munther Hamdan
Special to The Star

With the International Festival for Independent Theater Troupes (Fourth Amman Theater Days) on the way, theater lovers around the world are set to enjoy two weeks of universal theater performances. Organized annually by the Jordanian troupe Al Fawanees, the festival is considered as one of the most influential around. It will be held in cooperation with the Egyptian Al Warsha Troupe, the Ministry of Culture and the Jordanian Artists Association.

Every year a large number of theater troupes and critics gather in Amman to present their latest of shows and perspectives about theater. Jordanian, Tunisian, American and French troupes among others will be performing between 27 March till 8 April at the Royal Cultural Center.

Aimed at presenting the universal and boundless language of theater, the festival invites professional troupes which claim a long and reputable experience in theater. The gathering is a unique opportunity for Jordanians to get acquainted with different modes and techniques of theater other than they have been used to.

"This year there will be more troupes, and the event will be highly organized," said Nader Imran, director of Al Fawanees group, pointing to some gaps and problems in last year's event. Imran said that the program of the 1997 festival is expected to run as scheduled taking into consideration all

the organizing problems that might occur.

On schedule, 13 troupes have confirmed their participation in the event while many others who might be participating are not enlisted yet. Al Fawanees group, which had no show in last year's Festival, will be showing their "We Loved Each Other" this year. Imran says that last year the members of the group have been all preoccupied with the organizational problems making preparations for a play impossible. Other Jordanian plays will be performed by the Al Ahlia School presenting "Take Place" and Al Hannunah Folklore Group presenting Salem's Tale.

Among Arab troupes, the Lebanese Theater de Ville will be presenting "the Rituals of Signs and Changes", the Theater Day and Gaza Theater from Palestine. The Rule and The Exception and the Tunisian Shama for Artistic Production, the "32 July".

Among the plays to be performed by foreign troupes are Romeo and Juliet in Sarajevo by the Swedish Götterberg group and Entree Dans Le Theater Des Ombelles by the French La Comagnie De L'Emergence.

The festival includes a number of critical seminars which are going to highlight general aspects about modern theater. In this respect, Arab and foreign theater critics will be submitting papers that are to be compiled and distributed after the end of the event. This is one way to produce up to date perspectives about theater which serve as authorized references for researchers

and people interested.

This year's seminars will make use of the audio-visual techniques in presentations as well as a new interpretation system with translation from Arabic into English. Some topics to be discussed will be "Drama Scripts on Stage", Acting and Criticism and Theater audience. Participants will include such renowned names as Dr Mary Elias, Syria, Hassan Greitly, Egypt, Obeldo Basha, Lebanon, Awad Ali, Iraq, etc. Other Arab and foreign critics and media personalities have also been invited to witness the event.

What is new about this year's event is the participation of the Jordanian Artist Society as one of the organizers. It is expected that during the festival the society will announce its being an association.

In an attempt to provide more administrative facilities for the Festival's board, an online newsletter to be carried through the Internet worldwide is being prepared. This will give the board the opportunity to communicate and deal with all the administrative aspects through the Internet. Besides, all the information about the troupes and the activities and plans of the Festival can be downloaded.

Cosmetics from Troy



The Troy Trading Co., offers its new Claire Fragrance moisturizing creams and hand and body skin care on the market. Claire Fragrance is a British brand name that is now manufactured locally by Troy. Claire cosmetics have a distinct peach musk and vanilla aromas that wears all day and designed to bring the elegance in you. The product contains natural and moisturizing substances and multivitamins that keeps your skin lovely, fresh and protect it from the harsh weather.

Le Meridien Limassol grows

AS PART of the hotel's constant efforts to improve its facilities, another 45 extra large bedrooms have been built as an extension of the East wing of the building. Mr Kradinos Socratous, the head of marketing and sales at the Le Meridien Hotel in Limassol, "This will be in addition to two conference rooms—the Salamini and the Amathusia I and II," he added.

All the bedrooms of which 25 face the sea and 20 overlook the gardens will be of the same high standards as the existing ones, which are known to be largest in Cyprus. "They are each equipped with a separate bathroom and toilet, satellite TV, In-Room pay movies, direct dial telephones and 5 channel, radio in both bedroom and bathroom, hairdryer, mini bar as well as individual Digital-in-Room safes, Mr Socratous, who was part of the Cypriot delegation that came to Amman to attend the Cyprus Week that was held at the Forte Grand Hotel, said.

"Additionally 10 of our 45 new bedrooms will be designated as Executive business rooms equipped with all the necessary facilities that the most discerning business people would expect. The capacity of the hotel is now 295 bedrooms including our Garden



Villa Suites," he added. "All the Le Meridien public areas from the lobby to La Sirene Bar have been refurbished and the new La Promenade Bar and Terrace situated next to Le Nautile restaurant has now been created, with wonderful view of the sea and the Marina. The outside terrace has been glassed in and is equipped with heating lamps for those guests wishing to sit outside to enjoy the mild winter climate, even at the coldest time of the year," Mr Socratous said. These important modifications and improvements now make Le Meridien Limassol the most advanced conference and leisure resort in Cyprus.

Le Meridien Limassol is part of the well-known international chain "Le Meridien Hotels and Resorts" which has over 80 hotels world-wide throughout Europe, the Americas, Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Middle East and reservations can be made in virtually every country around the world through the Global Distribution Systems used by airlines, Le Meridien's own reservation system "Fortress" and through the Internet.

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Colorstay make-up is a revolution. It stays fresh, true looking, just applied all day long.

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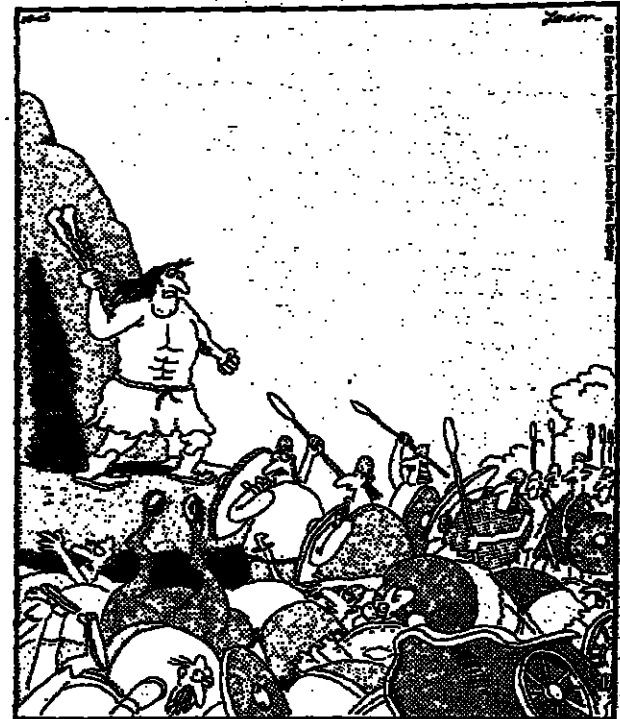
All Colorstay make-up collection is available at Abu Shakra's Showrooms and some refined Perfumeries.

THE FAR SIDE

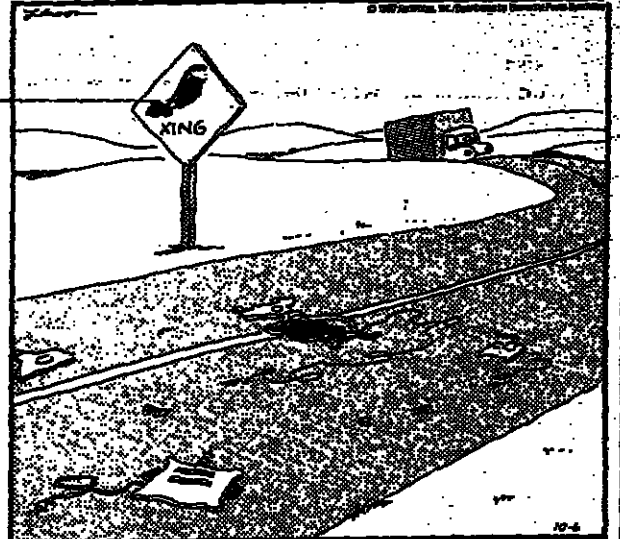
By GARY LARSON



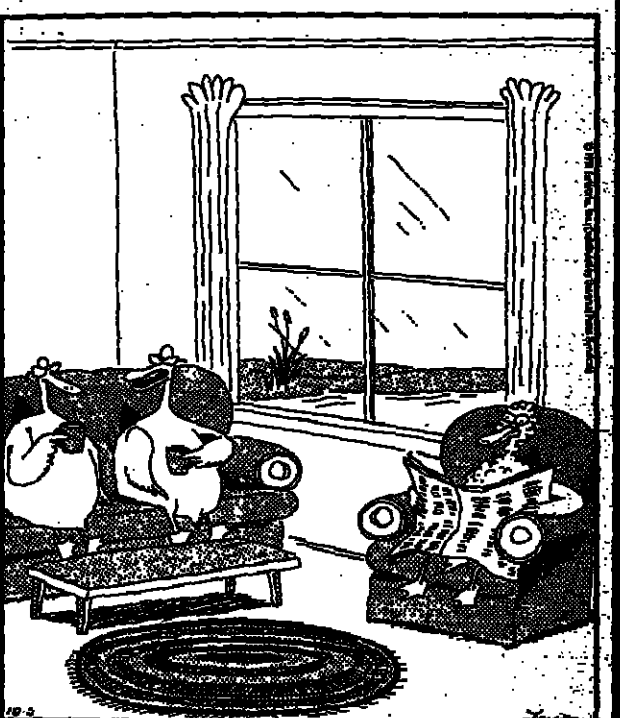
"Fools! They made me into a free-range chicken... and man, I never looked back."



Cornelius! I've been watching him! Beware of the jawbone!"



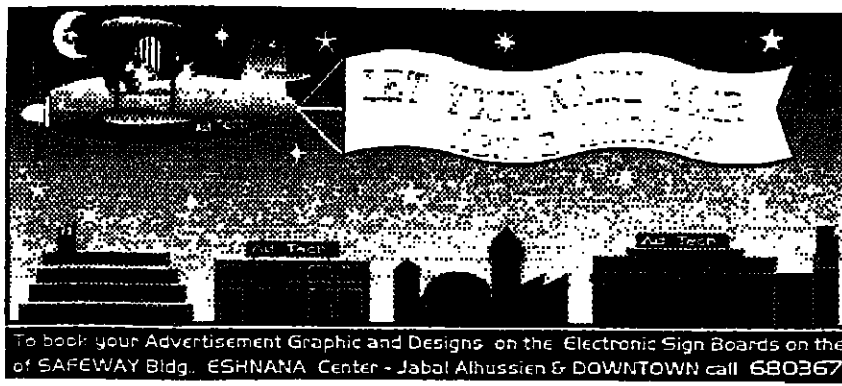
Historical note: For many years, until they became truly nasty, Vikings would plunder, loot and then egg the houses of coastal villagers.



"Oh, it's just Hank's little cross to bear—he's allergic to down and that's that."

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THE STAR'S

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Edited by Zeid Nasser

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Welcome to the Star's Workstation, the absolute source of what's hot and what's not in Jordan's IT market. For us on 644-298 or email us at Star@NETS.com.jo with your news and views.

The Internet's generic top level domain names: A little too crowded!

By Jawad Abbassi
Special to The Star

"SEEK PROFIT" where there is a crowd," goes the saying of Prophet Mohammed. The saying underlines the point that commerce needs interaction, exchange of ideas and the people to conduct it. The same applies to the Internet and its growing utility in business, exchange of ideas and public relations. The more users the Internet serves, the more effective it becomes. In other words, as the Internet's "crowd" expands its different uses become more obvious.

The astounding increase in the number of domain names on the Internet such as "microsoft.com", "go.com.jo" or "nets.com.jo" is the most prominent sign on the increase of its users.

The domain names currently fall into the following general top level domains: "edu" for education, "com" for commercial users, "gov" for governmental users, "net" for networks and "org" for organizations.

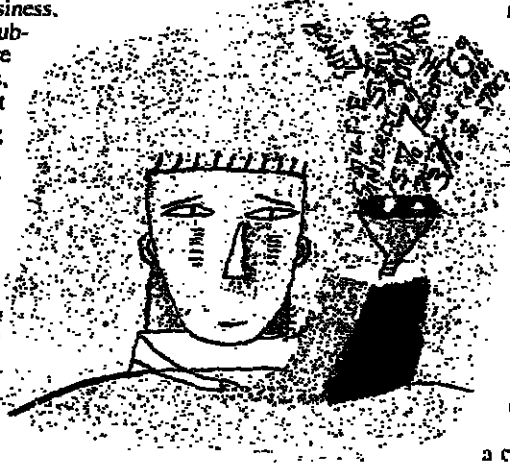
These generic top level domains are registered and coordinated by InterNIC, which is a division of the US-based Network Solutions.

Domain names, are translated by Domain Name Servers (DNS) on the Internet into the IP addresses (the Internet's specific network numbers) that they represent. For instance, nets.com.jo is actually 195.14.136.1 and so on.

InterNIC charges \$50 a year

for every domain name it registers, and it has, according to the Economist, collected more than \$20 million last year for its registration services.

In addition to the generic top level domains administered by InterNIC, there are the national domains such as "jo" for Jordan or "no" for Norway which are



administered by a certain body in every country, such as the National Information Center in Jordan, which also charge varying registration fees.

Some administrators of national domains followed a somewhat different approach to the generic top levels domains: for instance Britain gives its educational institutions the ".ac" TLD standing for academic and not the widely used ".edu", also the Australians use the second domain for commercial activities which is ".biz.au".

This background information on domain names is needed to explain the hurdles

facing the current domain allocation scheme. The increasing crowds entering the Internet have caused a lot of legal problems regarding who is actually entitled to a certain domain name (due to conflicts on commercial names and trade marks and so on). In addition, many think that InterNIC's monopoly on registering domain names (it even coordinates who is in charge of national domains) is not acceptable, especially when the big revenue it generates is taken into consideration. A third problem, at least from certain perspectives, is the limited nature of general top level domains which limit the choice of any party interested in registering a domain name.

For instance, suppose a company named ZZZ in Australia would like to register the domain name ZZZ.com only to find out that the name has already been taken by a company also named ZZZ in the US. Thus, ZZZ would need to adopt another domain name to still get its presence under the commercial top level domain, ".com".

The problems above were some of the reasons why the Internet Ad Hoc Committee, proposed in a recently published report (www.iahc.org), that new general domain names be introduced and that new registrars of these domain names (doing what InterNIC is doing for the old ones) be assigned. The committee believes that the introduction of new domain

The American Computer Show '97 in perspective: A celebration of Jordan's computer market

THE AMERICAN Computer Show '97, organized by the United States Embassy in Amman, ended last Friday, following three active show days which brought together some 30 companies and attracted thousands of visitors everyday.

This annual show, running for the fifth time, has become an important event on the calendar of computer companies and customers alike, and is aimed at promoting American computer and information technology products on the Jordanian market.

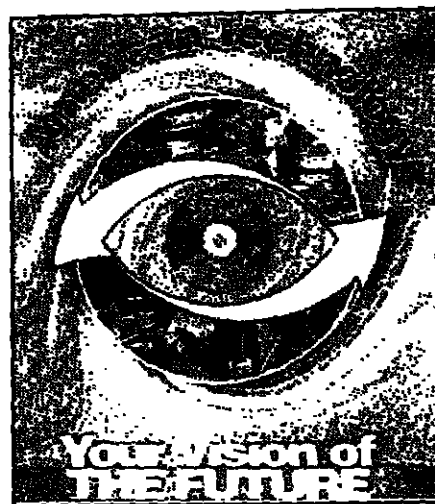
Apparently, as it seems, most of the major companies in Jordan carry American brands. The American Computer Show is a prime event for the Jordanian computer sector.

Following the official opening on Wednesday 12 March, the show opened its doors to the public on Thursday 13 and Friday 14 March.

Most American PC brands were on show, sporting the fastest Pentium processors, complete with multimedia. Also, the full range of computer peripherals and accessories available in the Jordanian market could be seen at the event. What's more, Jordan's on-line and Internet companies were present at the show with strength, emphasizing the lev-

els of on-line awareness in the country.

The exhibiting companies we spoke to during and after the American Show all



expressed their satisfaction with the event, and were pleased to see that it attracted such large numbers of the Jordanian public. "It provided us with excellent exposure and we met with many clients and potential customers," stated Hani Saadi, general manager of Saudi Communications Systems.

Others also commented on the show, stating that it represented an excellent sales opportunity. Mr Dia Abdo, marketing manager at Tanshah Information Systems Group

(TISG) said that, "we found the show to be very successful in terms of sales promotion, as we practically sold out our PCs that were on show at special rates for the event."

The Jordanian on-line community also found that the event represented an opportunity to meet with customers. Companies including NETS, Computer Networking Services (CNS), and Global One all stated that they were pleased with the event.

The American Computer Show has proved itself, without a doubt, to be a major computer and information technology event in Jordan, which competes with the Middle East Technology Show (METS) for the position of top computer exhibition in the country.

Obviously, most computer and information technology companies in Jordan appreciate the value of such exhibitions, while consumers need the continuity of such events to remain up-to-date on much of what is happening in the computing field.

It makes a lot of sense to see more annual computer events in Jordan. Let's hope more local companies appreciate their value, and increase the number of participants and better serve the Jordanian public. ■

News update

SIS offers TriDAT products in Jordan

● Sinam Integrated Systems (SIS) has recently started to market TriDAT personal computers in the Jordanian market.

TriDAT is a well-known American PC brand that is making headway in the US market with a full range of elegant desktops and notebooks.

NETS goes Internet On-line soon

● Although it is not official yet, NETS, a large Jordanian

bulletin board service (BBS) with about 2,000 users, will utilize a recently obtained Internet Service Provider (ISP) license to deliver full Internet services within the coming two months.

This means that there will be a second ISP in the market soon, in addition to Global One/Sprint Jordan which have been providing an Internet on-line service for over a year.

For now, the people at NETS are remaining quiet about the details of their Internet service, but it is just a matter of time before an official announcement is made.

Young, brash Portland blazing a new trail

PORTLAND, Oregon—The youngest team in the NBA also is the hottest.

The Portland Trail Blazers have won nine in a row, their longest winning streak in six years and the fourth-longest in franchise history.

Suddenly, the Blazers look like a formidable challenge for their first-round opponent, almost certainly either the Los Angeles Lakers or Houston Rockets.

"We're a hungry team," coach P.J. Carlesimo said Monday. "We want to win." The Blazers and their coach say it was only a coincidence that the winning streak began the day newspapers in New York and Vancouver, Wash., reported Carlesimo was soon to be fired.

"It wasn't something that we thought a lot about to be honest with you," Carlesimo said.

But whatever the reason, the Blazers are playing their best basketball of the season. "It doesn't take a brain surgeon to figure this out," Portland's Kenny Anderson said. "It's real simple. We're playing basketball. We have talent. Right now we're just better than the teams we're playing against."

"Talent-wise, we can compete with the best teams in the league, period."

The loss of Isaiah Rider to illness didn't hurt the team Sunday night when the Blazers easily beat the Clippers in Los Angeles 106-94. He might be out again Tuesday night, when Portland tries to make it 10 in a row at home against Sacramento.

Then it's off on the last big road trip of the season, five games in seven nights with stops in Milwaukee, Washington, New York, Atlanta and Charlotte.

Portland harbors a slim hope of moving up to the No. 4 spot in the Western Conference and gaining a homecourt advantage in the first round of the playoffs. But, entering Monday night's games, Portland still trailed the fourth-place Rockets by 5 1/2 games and the Lakers by six.

"With the margin they have



The Celetics, one of the group taking part in the NBA matches

and the amount of games left, you'd have to say it's a bit of a longshot," Carlesimo said. "But it's worth trying for."

Between 17 January and 26 February, the Blazers went 4-10, fueling the rumors that Carlesimo's days were numbered.

The turnaround was abrupt and dramatic.

—During the slump, Portland averaged 96.4 points and gave up 104.5. In the 9-0 streak, the Blazers have averaged 107.2 while giving up 94.6.

—In the slump, the Blazers shot 44.4 from the field, 33.0 from 3-point range. In the last nine games, they are shooting .516, .448 on 3-pointers.

Carlesimo notes that Rasheed Wallace and Arvydas Sabonis, the team's best front-line players, were hurt during the losing stretch and are just now returning to top form.

Currently, all five starters—Anderson, Rider, Sabonis, Wallace and Clifford Robinson—are averaging in double figures, as is Gary Trent off the bench.

The success comes even though the Blazers are both the youngest (averaging 25.76 years) and least experienced (2.47 years) in the NBA.

"Considering our youth and new faces, we've done pretty good to this point," Carlesimo

said. There were a lot of people shaking their heads in disbelief when Blazers' president Bob Whitsitt brought Anderson, Rider and Wallace—all former lottery picks—to the team last summer. All three brought baggage from their past.

Anderson was a disappointment in New Jersey. Rider had all kinds of problems off the court in Minnesota, and Wallace was inconsistent and hot tempered in his rookie season in Washington.

But Anderson has thrived in Portland, and Wallace is a candidate for most improved player in the league.

Rider has been penalized several times for missing practices and faces a marijuana possession charge from early in the season. More recently, he reportedly created a disturbance at a local charter aircraft service after missing the team plane.

But he's had some big games, too, and insists he loves playing for a winning, playoff-bound team. Several players have gotten in trouble for lashing out at Carlesimo. But the coach said such emotion is not necessarily a bad thing.

"As much as people make of our trials and tribulations

that we've had all year, most of them have been off the court," Carlesimo said. "A lot of the on-court ones have been emotion in losses or in tough games. The next day or

very shortly after that, we'll put it behind us."

Despite the widespread belief that the Blazers could disintegrate because of their fragile temperaments, Carlesimo said the players have never resorted to blaming each other.

"I think there's a genuine feeling among the players and coaches, and there has been all year, that we can be a very good team," he said.

Portland's recent victims have been mostly losing teams, the exceptions being Utah, Seattle and Cleveland—and Seattle was without Sam Perkins and Detlef Schrempf at the time.

Still, the Blazers were having a hard time beating those losing teams before.

"Teams that beat us two months, three months ago, they're dealing with a whole new, different team when they face Portland this time," Anderson said.

"Because we've got a different attitude. We're selfish. We just want to win." ■

Klinsmann plans to leave Bayern at season's end

BONN—Jurgen Klinsmann shocked German soccer on Tuesday when he announced he was leaving Bayern Munich at the end of the season because he does not fit in at the Bundesliga's richest but most controversial club.

"I had a talk with (chairman) Franz Beckenbauer last week and I told him that I would probably play abroad next season," the 32-year-old striker and Germany captain said. "I don't fit in here."

"I wanted to tell Bayern now so that they can plan for the future. There are many reasons (why I am leaving) and I have decided to act."

Klinsmann, who returned to Germany in 1995 after a successful spell with English side Tottenham, complained earlier in the season that he was unhappy with Bayern's defensive tactics and the way he had been treated when he went through a bad patch.

Bayern have a reputation for squabbling in the dressing rooms. The forward has often been at odds with captain Lothar Matthaus, his predecessor in charge of the national team.

His decision to quit was the biggest talking point among the players at training on Tuesday.

Bayern midfielder Mario Basler said he understood why Klinsmann was leaving and said he and other key players were also unhappy.

The atmosphere has been tense in Munich in the last week. It has emerged that Beckenbauer told the team that they were a poor side during a special meeting recently.

The "Kaiser" was also very critical in public after two defeats last week.

"It was obvious that the whole ballgame in Munich got on Jurgen's nerves," Bayern general manager Uli Hoeness said. "He has said that himself many times."

One of Klinsmann's lowest



Klinsmann

moments came at the end of last year when he was substituted in a key league match at his old club VfB Stuttgart where he made his name in the German game.

Shortly afterwards Klinsmann, who struggled to score goals in the first half of the season, threatened to leave Bayern.

"I have had to swallow a lot and I'm prepared to swallow a lot more to win the German championship," he said at the time. "But when everyone takes it out on me, I have to ask myself whether I belong here."

Tuesday's announcement still came as a surprise, since Klinsmann seemed to have settled his differences with the club who are still in the running to win the German championship despite their recent drop in form.

Klinsmann's contract is due to end in June 1998 but the forward has an opt-out clause which allows him to leave without a transfer fee.

The decision is almost certain to fuel speculation that he could return to England but he is also believed to have had offers from Spain. In addition to Tottenham, Klinsmann has played for Monaco and Internazionale.

Bayern have been working on boosting their forward line for several months and are expected to sign VfB Stuttgart's Brazilian striker Giovane Elber for the start of next season.

Kinnear on song for Europe

LONDON—Wimbledon manager Joe Kinnear might be forced into replacing up to four players in his tiring team which faces London rivals West Ham at Selhurst Park on Tuesday night but his song for Europe is as loud as ever.

"We've got 10 League games left and I've asked the lads to win seven of them to make sure we qualify for the UEFA Cup next season," he said. "It's a great position to be in, considering that people were asking me after we had lost the first three games of the season whether we would stay up."

Wimbledon, of course, might not even need a top-six Premiership finish to ensure their first taste of European football next season. They face Chelsea in the FA Cup semi-finals at Highbury on April 13 and Kinnear admitted: "That game is obviously a big focus for us. But I've always said the main ambition is to get into Europe by finishing high enough in the League and we can still do that."

"Before we had so much bad luck in the semi-finals of the Coca-Cola Cup against Leicester last week, we were

chasing success in all three competitions and although I've heard some people say we could now end up with nothing, we won't even let ourselves think that way."

"Five of our seven remaining home games are against teams who are also trying for European places and so everything is in our own hands."

Kinnear will have to take a late look at his log-weary troops before selecting his line-up tonight. Striker Efan Ekoku and midfielder Oyvind Leonhardsen both felt reaction to knocks picked up earlier in the season when the Dons crashed 3-1 to Blackburn on Saturday.

And strikers Dean Holdsworth (cracked rib) and Jon Goodman (head injury) are already both ruled out. Goodman had to withdraw from the Republic of Ireland's B team after being concussed at Ewood Park.

Signs of stress near the end of an extraordinary Dons' season will be a boost for West Ham, who still badly need points to climb away from the relegation zone.

They have problems in midfield with Michael Hughes suspended, Frank Lampard out until next season with a broken leg sustained in the goalless draw at Aston Villa on Saturday and Danny Williamson fearing a specialists' verdict on his damaged ankle could also mean the end of his campaign.

Ian Bishop was ready to soldier on despite a broken nose and manager Harry Redknapp insisted: "We need everybody digging in just like they have done in the last two games. We've taken four good points but still need a few more to start feeling safe."

"I've always thought we would stay up, even when we were really up against it just after Christmas but there is still a lot of work to do. And Wimbledon will be as tough as ever make no mistake about that."

"People might say we could be catching them on the slide after such a great season that they've had, but Joe Kinnear won't let them fade out. Anything we get tonight will be hard earned but we do need it." ■

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Continued on page

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● A khamasin weath

system will affect a

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weather will stabilize

with a slight rise in tem

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depression arrives, the

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